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THE

WORKS

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDMUND BURKE.

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CONTENTS.

VOL. V.

PAGE

Subſtance of the Speech on the Army Eſtimates, 1790 - - - - - - - - - - 1

Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings of certain Societies in London relative to that Event - - - 27

SUBSTANCE

OF

MR. BURKE's SPEECH,

IN THE

DEBATE ON THE ARMY ESTIMATES,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On Tuesday, the 9th Day of February, 1790;

COMPREHENDING

A DISCUSSION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION OF AFFAIRS IN FRANCE.

SUBSTANCE

OF

THE SPEECH,

&c. &c.

MR. BURKE's ſpeech on the report of the army eſtimates has not been correctly ſtated in ſome of the publick papers. It is of conſequence to him not to be miſunderſtood. The matter which incidentally came into diſcuſſion is of the moſt ſerious importance. It is thought that the heads and ſubſtance of the ſpeech will anſwer the purpoſe ſufficiently. If in making the abſtract, through defect of memory, in the perſon who now gives it, any difference at all ſhould be perceived from the ſpeech as it was ſpoken, it will not, the editor imagines, be found in any thing which may amount to a retraction of the opinions he then maintained, or to any ſoftening in the expreſſions in which they were conveyed.

Mr. Burke ſpoke a conſiderable time in anſwer to various arguments which had been inſiſted upon by Mr. Grenville and Mr. Pitt, for keeping an increaſed peace eſtabliſhment, and againſt an impro-

per jealouſy of the miniſters, in whom a full confidence, ſubject to reſponſibility, ought to be placed, on account of their knowledge of the real ſituation of affairs; the exact ſtate of which it frequently happened, that they could not diſcloſe, without violating the conſtitutional and political ſecrecy, neceſſary to the well-being of their country.

Mr. Burke ſaid in ſubſtance, That confidence might become a vice, and jealouſy a virtue, according to circumſtances. That confidence, of all publick virtues, was the moſt dangerous, and jealouſy in an houſe of commons, of all publick vices, the moſt tolerable; eſpecially where the number and the charge of ſtanding armies, in time of peace, was the queſtion.

That in the annual mutiny bill, the annual army was declared to be for the purpoſe of preſerving the balance of power in Europe. The propriety of its being larger or ſmaller depended, therefore, upon the true ſtate of that balance. If the increaſe of peace eſtabliſhments demanded of parliament agreed with the manifeſt appearance of the balance, confidence in miniſters, as to the particulars, would be very proper. If the increaſe was not at all ſupported by any ſuch appearance, he thought great jealouſy might, and ought to be, entertained on that ſubject.

That he did not find, on a review of all Europe, that, politically, we ſtood in the ſmalleſt degree of

danger from any one ſtate or kingdom it contained; nor that any other foreign powers than our own allies were likely to obtain a conſiderable preponderance in the ſcale.

That France had hitherto been our firſt object, in all conſiderations concerning the balance of power. The preſence or abſence of France totally varied every ſort of ſpeculation relative to that balance.

That France is, at this time, in a political light, to be conſidered as expunged out of the ſyſtem of Europe. Whether ſhe could ever appear in it again, as a leading power, was not eaſy to determine: but at preſent he conſidered France as not politically exiſting; and moſt aſſuredly it would take up much time to reſtore her to her former active exiſtence—*Gallos quoque in bellis floruiſſe audivimus*, might poſſibly be the language of the riſing generation. He did not mean to deny that it was our duty to keep our eye on that nation, and to regulate our preparation by the ſymptoms of her recovery.

That it was to her *ſtrength*, not to her *form of government* which we were to attend; becauſe republicks, as well as monarchies, were ſuſceptible of ambition, jealouſy, and anger, the uſual cauſes of war.

But if, while France continued in this ſwoon, we ſhould go on increaſing our expences, we

ſhould certainly make ourſelves leſs a match for her, when it became our concern to arm.

It was ſaid, that as ſhe had ſpeedily fallen, ſhe might ſpeedily riſe again. He doubted this. That the fall from an height was with an accelerated velocity; but to lift a weight up to that height again was difficult, and oppoſed by the laws of phyſical and political gravitation.

In a political view, France was low indeed. She had loſt every thing, even to her name.

" *Jacet ingens littore truncus,*
"*Avolſumque humeris* caput, *et ſine* nomine *corpus**."

He was aſtoniſhed at it—he was alarmed at it—he trembled at the uncertainty of all human greatneſs.

Since the houſe had been prorogued in the ſummer much work was done in France. The French

* Mr. Burke, probably, had in his mind the remainder of the paſſage, and was filled with ſome congenial apprehenſions:

" Hæc finis Priami fatorum; hic exitus illum
" Sorte tulit, Trojam incenſam, & prolapſa videntem
" Pergama; tot quondam populis, terriſque, ſuperbum
" Regnatorem Aſiæ. Jacet ingens littore truncus,
" Avolſumque humeris caput, & ſine nomine corpus.
" *At me* tum primum ſævus circumſtetit horror;
" Obſtupui: *ſubiit chari genitoris imago*"——

had

had ſhewn themſelves the ableſt architects of ruin that had hitherto exiſted in the world. In that very ſhort ſpace of time they had completely pulled down to the ground, their monarchy; their church; their nobility; their law; their revenue; their army; their navy; their commerce; their arts; and their manufactures. They had done their buſineſs for us as rivals, in a way in which twenty Ramillies or Blenheims could never have done it. Were we abſolute conquerors, and France to lie proſtrate at our feet, we ſhould be aſhamed to ſend a commiſſion to ſettle their affairs, which could impoſe ſo hard a law upon the French, and ſo deſtructive of all their conſequence as a nation, as that they had impoſed upon themſelves.

France, by the mere circumſtance of its vicinity, had been, and in a degree always muſt be, an object of our vigilance, either with regard to her actual power, or to her influence and example. As to the former, he had ſpoken; as to the latter, (her example) he ſhould ſay a few words: for by this example our friendſhip and our intercourſe with that nation had once been, and might again, become more dangerous to us than their worſt hoſtility.

In the laſt century, Louis the Fourteenth had eſtabliſhed a greater and better diſciplined military force than ever had been before ſeen in Eu-

rope, and with it a perfect deſpotiſm. Though that deſpotiſm was proudly arrayed in manners, gallantry, ſplendour, magnificence, and even covered over with the impoſing robes of ſcience, literature, and arts, it was, in government, nothing better than a painted and gilded tyranny; in religion, a hard, ſtern intolerance, the fit companion and auxiliary to the deſpotick tyranny which prevailed in its government. The ſame character of deſpotiſm inſinuated itſelf into every court of Europe—the ſame ſpirit of diſproportioned magnificence—the ſame love of ſtanding armies, above the ability of the people. In particular, our then ſovereigns, King Charles and King James, fell in love with the government of their neighbour, ſo flattering to the pride of kings. A ſimilarity of ſentiments brought on connections equally dangerous to the intereſts and liberties of their country. It were well that the infection had gone no farther than the throne. The admiration of a government flouriſhing and ſucceſsful, unchecked in its operations, and ſeeming therefore to compaſs its objects more ſpeedily and effectually, gained ſomething upon all ranks of people. The good patriots of that day, however, ſtruggled againſt it. They ſought nothing more anxiouſly than to break off all communication with France, and to beget a total alienation from its councils and its example; which,

which, by the animoſity prevalent between the abettors of their religious ſyſtem and the aſſertors of ours, was, in ſome degree, effected.

This day the evil is totally changed in France: but there is an evil there. The diſeaſe is altered; but the vicinity of the two countries remains, and muſt remain; and the natural mental habits of mankind are ſuch, that the preſent diſtemper of France is far more likely to be contagious than the old one; for it is not quite eaſy to ſpread a paſſion for ſervitude among the people: but in all evils of the oppoſite kind our natural inclinations are flattered. In the caſe of deſpotiſm there is the *fœdum crimen ſervitutis;* in the laſt the *falſa* ſpecies *libertatis;* and accordingly, as the hiſtorian ſays, *pronis auribus accipitur.*

In the laſt age we were in danger of being entangled by the example of France in the net of a relentleſs deſpotiſm. It is not neceſſary to ſay any thing upon that example. It exiſts no longer. Our preſent danger from the example of a people, whoſe character knows no medium, is, with regard to government, a danger from anarchy; a danger of being led through an admiration of ſucceſsful fraud and violence, to an imitation of the exceſſes of an irrational, unprincipled, proſcribing, confiſcating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy. On the ſide of religion, the danger of their example is no longer from intolerance,

tolerance, but from atheiſm; a foul, unnatural vice, foe to all the dignity and conſolation of mankind; which ſeems in France, for a long time, to have been embodied into a faction, accredited, and almoſt avowed.

Theſe are our preſent dangers from France: but, in his opinion, the very worſt part of the example ſet is, in the late aſſumption of citizenſhip by the army, and the whole of the arrangement, or rather diſarrangement of their military.

He was ſorry that his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox) had dropped even a word expreſſive of exultation on that circumſtance; or that he ſeemed of opinion that the objection from ſtanding armies was at all leſſened by it. He attributed this opinion of Mr. Fox entirely to his known zeal for the beſt of all cauſes, Liberty. That it was with a pain inexpreſſible he was obliged to have even the ſhadow of a difference with his friend, whoſe authority would be always great with him, and with all thinking people—*Quæ maxima ſemper cenſetur nobis, et* erit *quæ maxima ſemper*—His confidence in Mr. Fox was ſuch, and ſo ample, as to be almoſt implicit. That he was not aſhamed to avow that degree of docility. That when the choice is well made, it ſtrengthens inſtead of oppreſſing our intellect. That he who calls in the aid of an equal underſtanding doubles his own. He who profits of a ſuperiour underſtanding, raiſes his powers to a level

level with the height of the ſuperiour underſtanding he unites with. He had found the benefit of ſuch a junction, and would not lightly depart from it. He wiſhed almoſt, on all occaſions, that his ſentiments were underſtood to be conveyed in Mr. Fox's words; and that he wiſhed, as amongſt the greateſt benefits he could wiſh the country, an eminent ſhare of power to that right honourable gentleman; becauſe he knew that, to his great and maſterly underſtanding, he had joined the greateſt poſſible degree of that natural moderation, which is the beſt corrective of power; that he was of the moſt artleſs, candid, open, and benevolent diſpoſition; diſintereſted in the extreme; of a temper mild and placable, even to a fault; without one drop of gall in his whole conſtitution.

That the houſe muſt perceive, from his coming forward to mark an expreſſion or two of his beſt friend, how anxious he was to keep the diſtemper of France from the leaſt countenance in England, where he was ſure ſome wicked perſons had ſhewn a ſtrong diſpoſition to recommend an imitation of the French ſpirit of reform. He was ſo ſtrongly oppoſed to any the leaſt tendency towards the *means* of introducing a democracy like theirs, as well as to the *end* itſelf, that much as it would afflict him, if ſuch a thing could be attempted, and that any friend of his could concur in ſuch meaſures, (he was far, very far, from believing they could;)

could;) he would abandon his beſt friends, and join with his worſt enemies to oppoſe either the means or the end; and to reſiſt all violent exertions of the ſpirit of innovation, ſo diſtant from all principles of true and ſafe reformation; a ſpirit well calculated to overturn ſtates, but perfectly unfit to amend them.

That he was no enemy to reformation. Almoſt every buſineſs in which he was much concerned, from the firſt day he ſat in that houſe to that hour, was a buſineſs of reformation; and when he had not been employed in correcting, he had been employed in reſiſting abuſes. Some traces of this ſpirit in him now ſtand on their ſtatute book. In his opinion, any thing which unneceſſarily tore to pieces the contexture of the ſtate, not only prevented all real reformation, but introduced evils which would call, but perhaps, call in vain, for new reformation.

That he thought the French nation very unwiſe. What they valued themſelves on, was a diſgrace to them. They had gloried (and ſome people in England had thought fit to take ſhare in that glory) in making a revolution; as if revolutions were good things in themſelves. All the horrours, and all the crimes of the anarchy which led to their revolution, which attend its progreſs, and which may virtually attend it in its eſtabliſhment, paſs for nothing with the lovers of revolutions. The

French

French have made their way through the deſtruction of their country, to a bad conſtitution, when they were abſolutely in poſſeſſion of a good one. They were in poſſeſſion of it the day the ſtates met in ſeparate orders. Their buſineſs, had they been either virtuous, or wiſe, or had been left to their own judgment, was to ſecure the ſtability and independence of the ſtates, according to thoſe orders, under the monarch on the throne. It was then their duty to redreſs grievances.

Inſtead of redreſſing grievances, and improving the fabrick of their ſtate, to which they were called by their monarch, and ſent by their country, they were made to take a very different courſe. They firſt deſtroyed all the balances and counterpoiſes which ſerve to fix the ſtate, and to give it a ſteady direction; and which furniſh ſure correctives to any violent ſpirit which may prevail in any of the orders. Theſe balances exiſted in their oldeſt conſtitution; and in the conſtitution of this country; and in the conſtitution of all the countries in Europe. Theſe they raſhly deſtroyed, and then they melted down the whole into one incongruous, ill-connected maſs.

When they had done this, they inſtantly, and with the moſt atrocious perfidy and breach of all faith among men, laid the axe to the root of all property, and conſequently of all national proſperity, by the principles they eſtabliſhed, and the example

example they ſet, in confiſcating all the poſſeſſions of the church. They made and recorded a ſort of *inſtitute* and *digeſt* of anarchy, called the rights of man, in ſuch a pedantick abuſe of elementary principles as would have diſgraced boys at ſchool; but this declaration of rights was worſe than trifling and pedantick in them; as by their name and authority they ſyſtematically deſtroyed every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. By this mad declaration they ſubverted the ſtate; and brought on ſuch calamities as no country, without a long war, has ever been known to ſuffer, and which may in the end produce ſuch a war, and perhaps, many ſuch.

With them the queſtion was not between deſpotiſm and liberty. The ſacrifice they made of the peace and power of their country was not made on the altar of freedom. Freedom, and a better ſecurity for freedom than that they have taken, they might have had without any ſacrifice at all. They brought themſelves into all the calamities they ſuffer, not that through them they might obtain a Britiſh conſtitution; they plunged themſelves headlong into thoſe calamities, to prevent themſelves from ſettling into that conſtitution, or into any thing reſembling it.

That if they ſhould perfectly ſucceed in what they propoſe, as they are likely enough to do, and eſtabliſh a democracy, or a mob of democracies,

in

in a country circumſtanced like France, they will eſtabliſh a very bad government—a very bad ſpecies of tyranny.

That, the worſt effect of all their proceeding was on their military, which was rendered an army for every purpoſe but that of defence. That, if the queſtion was, whether ſoldiers were to forget they were citizens, as an abſtract propoſition, he could have no difference about it; though as it is uſual, when abſtract principles are to be applied, much was to be thought on the manner of uniting the character of citizen and ſoldier. But as applied to the events which had happened in France, where the abſtract principle was cloathed with its circumſtances, he thought that his friend would agree with him, that what was done there furniſhed no matter of exultation, either in the act or the example. Theſe ſoldiers were not citizens; but baſe hireling mutineers, and mercenary ſordid deſerters, wholly deſtitute of any honourable principle. Their conduct was one of the fruits of that anarchick ſpirit, from the evils of which a democracy itſelf was to be reſorted to, by thoſe who were the leaſt diſpoſed to that form, as a ſort of refuge. It was not an army in corps and with diſcipline, and embodied under the reſpectable patriot citizens of the ſtate in reſiſting tyranny. Nothing like it. It was the caſe of common ſoldiers deſerting from their officers,

to

to join a furious, licentious populace. It was a deſertion to a cauſe, the real object of which was to level all thoſe inſtitutions, and to break all thoſe connections, natural and civil, that regulate and hold together the community by a chain of ſubordination; to raiſe ſoldiers againſt their officers; ſervants againſt their maſters; tradeſmen againſt their cuſtomers; artificers againſt their employers; tenants againſt their landlords; curates againſt their biſhops; and children againſt their parents. That this cauſe of theirs was not an enemy to ſervitude, but to ſociety.

He wiſhed the houſe to conſider, how the members would like to have their manſions pulled down and pillaged, their perſons abuſed, inſulted, and deſtroyed; their title deeds brought out and burned before their faces, and themſelves and their families driven to ſeek refuge in every nation throughout Europe, for no other reaſon than this; that without any fault of theirs, they were born gentlemen, and men of property, and were ſuſpected of a deſire to preſerve their conſideration and their eſtates. The deſertion in France was to aid an abominable ſedition, the very profeſſed principle of which was an implacable hoſtility to nobility and gentry, and whoſe ſavage war-hoop was "*à l'Ariſtocrate*," by which ſenſeleſs, bloody cry, they animated one another to rapine and murder; whilſt abetted by ambitious men of another claſs,

they

they were cruſhing every thing reſpectable and virtuous in their nation, and to their power diſgracing almoſt every name, by which we formerly knew there was ſuch a country in the world as France.

He knew too well, and he felt as much as any man, how difficult it was to accommodate a ſtanding army to a free conſtitution, or to any conſtitution. An armed, diſciplined body is, in its eſſence, dangerous to liberty; undiſciplined it is ruinous to ſociety. Its component parts are, in the latter caſe, neither good citizens nor good ſoldiers. What have they thought of in France, under ſuch a difficulty as almoſt puts the human faculties to a ſtand? They have put their army under ſuch a variety of principles of duty, that it is more likely to breed litigants, pettifoggers, and mutineers, than ſoldiers *. They have ſet up, to balance their crown army, another army, deriving under another authority, called a municipal army—a balance of armies, not of orders. Theſe latter they have deſtroyed with every mark of inſult and oppreſſion. States may, and they will beſt, exiſt with a partition of civil powers. Armies cannot exiſt under a divided command. This ſtate of things he thought, in effect, a ſtate of war, or, at beſt, but a truce inſtead of peace, in the country.

* They are ſworn to obey the king, the nation, and the law.

What a dreadful thing is a ſtanding army, for the conduct of the whole or any part of which, no man is reſponſible! In the preſent ſtate of the French crown army, is the crown reſponſible for the whole of it? Is there any general who can be reſponſible for the obedience of a brigade? Any colonel for that of a regiment? Any captain for that of a company? And as to the municipal army, reinforced as it is by the new citizen-deſerters, under whoſe command are they? Have we not ſeen them, not led by, but dragging their nominal commander with a rope about his neck, when they, or thoſe whom they accompanied, proceeded to the moſt atrocious acts of treaſon and murder? Are any of theſe armies? Are any of theſe citizens?

We have in ſuch a difficulty as that of fitting a ſtanding army to the ſtate, he conceived, done much better. We have not diſtracted our army by divided principles of obedience. We have put them under a ſingle authority, with a ſimple (our common) oath of fidelity; and we keep the whole under our annual inſpection. This was doing all that could be ſafely done.

He felt ſome concern that this ſtrange thing called a Revolution in France, ſhould be compared with the glorious event commonly called the Revolution in England; and the conduct of the ſoldiery, on that occaſion, compared with the behaviour of ſome of the troops of France in the preſent

ſent inſtance. At that period the Prince of Orange, a prince of the blood-royal in England, was called in by the flower of the Engliſh ariſtocracy to defend its antient conſtitution, and not to level all diſtinctions. To this prince, ſo invited, the ariſtocratick leaders who commanded the troops went over with their ſeveral corps, in bodies, to the deliverer of their country. Ariſtocratick leaders brought up the corps of citizens who newly enliſted in this cauſe. Military obedience changed its object; but military diſcipline was not for a moment interrupted in its principle. The troops were ready for war, but indiſpoſed to mutiny.

But as the conduct of the Engliſh armies was different, ſo was that of the whole Engliſh nation at that time. In truth, the circumſtances of our revolution (as it is called) and that of France are juſt the reverſe of each other in almoſt every particular, and in the whole ſpirit of the tranſaction. With us it was the caſe of a legal monarch attempting arbitrary power—in France it is the caſe of an arbitrary monarch, beginning, from whatever cauſe, to legaliſe his authority. The one was to be reſiſted, the other was to be managed and directed; but in neither caſe was the order of the ſtate to be changed, leſt government might be ruined, which ought only to be corrected and legaliſed. With us we got rid of the man, and preſerved the conſtituent parts of the ſtate. There

they get rid of the conſtituent parts of the ſtate, and keep the man. What we did was in truth and ſubſtance, and in a conſtitutional light, a revolution, not made, but prevented. We took ſolid ſecurities; we ſettled doubtful queſtions; we corrected anomalies in our law. In the ſtable fundamental parts of our conſtitution we made no revolution; no, nor any alteration at all. We did not impair the monarchy. Perhaps it might be ſhewn that we ſtrengthened it very conſiderably. The nation kept the ſame ranks, the ſame orders, the ſame privileges, the ſame franchiſes, the ſame rules for property, the ſame ſubordinations, the ſame order in the law, in the revenue, and in the magiſtracy; the ſame lords, the ſame commons, the ſame corporations, the ſame electors.

The church was not impaired. Her eſtates, her majeſty, her ſplendour, her orders and gradations continued the ſame. She was preſerved in her full efficiency, and cleared only of a certain intolerance, which was her weakneſs and diſgrace. The church and the ſtate were the ſame after the revolution that they were before, but better ſecured in every part.

Was little done becauſe a revolution was not made in the conſtitution? No! Every thing was done; becauſe we commenced with reparation not with ruin. Accordingly the ſtate flouriſhed. Inſtead of lying as dead, in a ſort of trance, or ex-

poſed as ſome others, in an epileptick fit, to the pity or deriſion of the world, for her wild, ridiculous convulſive movements, impotent to every purpoſe but that of daſhing out her brains againſt the pavement, Great Britain roſe above the ſtandard, even of her former ſelf. An æra of a more improved domeſtick proſperity then commenced, and ſtill continues, not only unimpaired, but growing, under the waſting hand of time. All the energies of the country were awakened. England never preſerved a firmer countenance, or a more vigorous arm, to all her enemies, and to all her rivals. Europe under her reſpired and revived. Every where ſhe appeared as the protector, aſſertor, or avenger of liberty. A war was made and ſupported againſt fortune itſelf. The treaty of Ryſwick, which firſt limited the power of France, was ſoon after made: the grand alliance very ſhortly followed, which ſhook to the foundations the dreadful power which menaced the independence of mankind. The ſtates of Europe lay happy under the ſhade of a great and free monarchy, which knew how to be great without endangering its own peace at home, or the internal or external peace of any of its neighbours.

Mr. Burke ſaid he ſhould have felt very unpleaſantly if he had not delivered theſe ſentiments. He was near the end of his natural, probably ſtill nearer the end of his political career; that he

was weak and weary; and wiſhed for reſt. That he was little diſpoſed to controverſies, or what is called a detailed oppoſition. That at his time of life, if he could not do ſomething by ſome ſort of weight of opinion, natural or acquired, it was uſeleſs and indecorous to attempt any thing by mere ſtruggle. *Turpe ſenex miles.* That he had for that reaſon little attended the army buſineſs, or that of the revenue, or almoſt any other matter of detail for ſome years paſt. That he had, however, his taſk. He was far from condemning ſuch oppoſition; on the contrary, he moſt highly applauded it, where a juſt occaſion exiſted for it, and gentlemen had vigour and capacity to purſue it. Where a great occaſion occurred, he was, and while he continued in parliament, would be amongſt the moſt active and the moſt earneſt, as he hoped he had ſhewn on a late event. With reſpect to the conſtitution itſelf, he wiſhed few alterations in it. Happy if he left it not the worſe for any ſhare he had taken in its ſervice.

Mr. Fox then roſe, and declared, in ſubſtance, that ſo far as regarded the French army, he went no farther than the general principle, by which that army ſhewed itſelf indiſpoſed to be an inſtrument in the ſervitude of their fellow citizens, but did not enter into the particulars of their conduct. He declared, that he did not affect a democracy. That he always thought any of the ſimple,

ſimple, unbalanced governments bad; ſimple monarchy, ſimple ariſtocracy, ſimple democracy; he held them all imperfect or vicious: all were bad by themſelves: the compoſition alone was good. That theſe had been always his principles, in which he had agreed with his friend Mr. Burke, of whom he ſaid many kind and flattering things, which Mr. Burke, I take it for granted, will know himſelf too well to think he merits, from any thing but Mr. Fox's acknowledged good-nature. Mr. Fox thought, however, that, in many caſes, Mr. Burke was rather carried too far by his hatred to innovation.

Mr. Burke ſaid, he well knew that theſe had been Mr. Fox's invariable opinions; that they were a ſure ground for the confidence of his country. But he had been fearful, that cabals of very different intentions, would be ready to make uſe of his great name, againſt his character and ſentiments, in order to derive a credit to their deſtructive machinations.

Mr. Sheridan then roſe, and made a lively and eloquent ſpeech againſt Mr. Burke; in which, among other things, he ſaid that Mr. Burke had libelled the national aſſembly of France, and had caſt out reflections on ſuch characters as thoſe of the Marquis de la Fayette and Mr. Bailly.

Mr. Burke ſaid, that he did not libel the national aſſembly of France, whom he conſidered very

little in the diſcuſſion of theſe matters. That he thought all the ſubſtantial power reſided in the republick of Paris, whoſe authority guided, or whoſe example was followed by, all the republicks of France. The republick of Paris had an army under their orders, and not under thoſe of the national aſſembly.

N. B. As to the particular gentlemen, I do not remember that Mr. Burke mentioned either of them—certainly not Mr. Bailly. He alluded, undoubtedly, to the caſe of the Marquis de la Fayette; but whether what he aſſerted of him be a libel on him, muſt be left to thoſe who are acquainted with the buſineſs.

Mr. Pitt concluded the debate with becoming gravity and dignity, and a reſerve on both ſides of the queſtion, as related to France, fit for a perſon in a miniſterial ſituation. He ſaid, that what he had ſpoken only regarded France when ſhe ſhould unite, which he rather thought ſhe ſoon might, with the liberty ſhe had acquired, the bleſſings of law and order. He, too, ſaid ſeveral civil things concerning the ſentiments of Mr. Burke, as applied to this country.

MR.

MR. BURKE's

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

REVOLUTION IN FRANCE,

AND ON THE

PROCEEDINGS IN CERTAIN SOCIETIES IN LONDON,

RELATIVE TO THAT EVENT.

IN

A LETTER

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SENT TO A GENTLEMAN

IN PARIS.

1790.

IT may not be unneceſſary to inform the Reader, that the following Reflections had their origin in a correſpondence between the Author and a very young gentleman at Paris, who did him the honour of deſiring his opinion upon the important tranſactions, which then, and ever ſince, have ſo much occupied the attention of all men. An anſwer was written ſome time in the month of October 1789; but it was kept back upon prudential conſiderations. That letter is alluded to in the beginning of the following ſheets. It has been ſince forwarded to the perſon to whom it was addreſſed. The reaſons for the delay in ſending it were aſſigned in a ſhort letter to the ſame gentleman. This produced on his part a new and preſſing application for the Author's ſentiments.

The Author began a ſecond and more full diſcuſſion on the ſubject. This he had ſome thoughts of publiſhing early in the laſt ſpring; but the matter gaining upon him, he found that what he had undertaken not only far exceeded the meaſure of a letter, but that its importance required rather a more detailed conſideration than at that time he had any leiſure to beſtow upon it. However, having thrown down his firſt thoughts in the form

of

of a letter, and indeed when he ſat down to write, having intended it for a private letter, he found it difficult to change the form of addreſs, when his ſentiments had grown into a greater extent, and had received another direction. A different plan, he is ſenſible, might be more favourable to a commodious diviſion and diſtribution of his matter.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS,

&c. &c.

DEAR SIR,

YOU are pleaſed to call again, and with ſome earneſtneſs, for my thoughts on the late proceedings in France. I will not give you reaſon to imagine that I think my ſentiments of ſuch value as to wiſh myſelf to be ſolicited about them. They are of too little conſequence to be very anxiouſly either communicated or withheld. It was from attention to you, and to you only, that I heſitated at the time when you firſt deſired to receive them. In the firſt letter I had the honour to write to you, and which at length I ſend, I wrote neither for, nor from, any deſcription of men; nor ſhall I in this. My errours, if any, are my own. My reputation alone is to anſwer for them.

You ſee, Sir, by the long letter I have tranſmitted to you, that though I do moſt heartily wiſh that France may be animated by a ſpirit of rational liberty, and that I think you bound, in all honeſt policy, to provide a permanent body, in which that ſpirit may reſide, and an effectual organ, by which it may act, it is my misfortune to entertain great

great doubts concerning ſeveral material points in your late tranſactions.

You imagined, when you wrote laſt, that I might poſſibly be reckoned among the approvers of certain proceedings in France, from the ſolemn publick ſeal of ſanction they have received from two clubs of gentlemen in London, called the Conſtitutional Society, and the Revolution Society.

I certainly have the honour to belong to more clubs than one, in which the conſtitution of this kingdom, and the principles of the glorious revolution are held in high reverence: and I reckon myſelf among the moſt forward in my zeal for maintaining that conſtitution and thoſe principles in their utmoſt purity and vigour. It is becauſe I do ſo, that I think it neceſſary for me, that there ſhould be no miſtake. Thoſe who cultivate the memory of our revolution, and thoſe who are attached to the conſtitution of this kingdom, will take good care how they are involved with perſons who, under the pretext of zeal towards the revolution and conſtitution, too frequently wander from their true principles; and are ready on every occaſion to depart from the firm but cautious and deliberate ſpirit which produced the one, and which preſides in the other. Before I proceed to anſwer the more material particulars in your letter, I ſhall beg leave to give you ſuch information as I have been able to obtain of the two clubs which

which have thought proper, as bodies, to interfere in the concerns of France; firſt aſſuring you, that I am not, and that I have never been, a member of either of thoſe ſocieties.

The firſt, calling itſelf the Conſtitutional Society, or Society for Conſtitutional Information, or by ſome ſuch title, is, I believe, of ſeven or eight years ſtanding. The inſtitution of this ſociety appears to be of a charitable, and ſo far of a laudable, nature: it was intended for the circulation, at the expence of the members, of many books, which few others would be at the expence of buying; and which might lie on the hands of the bookſellers, to the great loſs of an uſeful body of men. Whether the books ſo charitably circulated, were ever as charitably read, is more than I know. Poſſibly ſeveral of them have been exported to France; and, like goods not in requeſt here, may with you have found a market. I have heard much talk of the lights to be drawn from books that are ſent from hence. What improvements they have had in their paſſage (as it is ſaid ſome liquors are meliorated by croſſing the ſea) I cannot tell: but I never heard a man of common judgment, or the leaſt degree of information, ſpeak a word in praiſe of the greater part of the publications circulated by that ſociety; nor have their proceedings been accounted, except by ſome of themſelves, as of any ſerious conſequence.

Your

Your national aſſembly ſeems to entertain much the ſame opinion that I do of this poor charitable club. As a nation, you reſerved the whole ſtock of your eloquent acknowledgments for the Revolution Society; when their fellows in the Conſtitutional were, in equity, entitled to ſome ſhare Since you have ſelected the Revolution Society as the great object of your national thanks and praiſes, you will think me excuſeable in making its late conduct the ſubject of my obſervations. The national aſſembly of France has given importance to theſe gentlemen by adopting them; and they return the favour, by acting as a committee in England for extending the principles of the national aſſembly. Henceforward we muſt conſider them as a kind of privileged perſons; as no inconſiderable members in the diplomatick body. This is one among the revolutions which have given ſplendour to obſcurity, and diſtinction to undiſcerned merit. Until very lately I do not recollect to have heard of this club. I am quite ſure that it never occupied a moment of my thoughts; nor, I believe, thoſe of any perſon out of their own ſet. I find, upon inquiry, that on the anniverſary of the revolution in 1688, a club of diſſenters, but of what denomination I know not, have long had the cuſtom of hearing a ſermon in one of their churches; and that afterwards they ſpent the day cheerfully, as other clubs do, at the tavern.

vern. But I never heard that any publick meaſure, or political ſyſtem, much leſs that the merits of the conſtitution of any foreign nation, had been the ſubject of a formal proceeding at their feſtivals; until, to my inexpreſſible ſurpriſe, I found them in a ſort of publick capacity, by a congratulatory addreſs, giving an authoritative ſanction to the proceedings of the national aſſembly in France.

In the ancient principles and conduct of the club, ſo far at leaſt as they were declared, I ſee nothing to which I could take exception. I think it very probable, that for ſome purpoſe, new members may have entered among them; and that ſome truly chriſtian politicians, who love to diſpenſe benefits, but are careful to conceal the hand which diſtributes the dole, may have made them the inſtruments of their pious deſigns. Whatever I may have reaſon to ſuſpect concerning private management, I ſhall ſpeak of nothing as of a certainty but what is publick.

For one, I ſhould be ſorry to be thought, directly or indirectly, concerned in their proceedings. I certainly take my full ſhare, along with the reſt of the world, in my individual and private capacity, in ſpeculating on what has been done, or is doing, on the publick ſtage; in any place ancient or modern; in the republick of Rome, or the republick of Paris; but having no

general apoſtolical miſſion, being a citizen of a particular ſtate, and being bound up in a conſiderable degree, by its publick will, I ſhould think it at leaſt improper and irregular for me to open a formal publick correſpondence with the actual government of a foreign nation, without the expreſs authority of the government under which I live.

I ſhould be ſtill more unwilling to enter into that correſpondence, under any thing like an equivocal deſcription, which to many, unacquainted with our uſages, might make the addreſs, in which I joined, appear as the act of perſons in ſome ſort of corporate capacity, acknowledged by the laws of this kingdom, and authorized to ſpeak the ſenſe of ſome part of it. On account of the ambiguity and uncertainty of unauthorized general deſcriptions, and of the deceit which may be practiſed under them, and not from mere formality, the houſe of commons would reject the moſt ſneaking petition for the moſt trifling object, under that mode of ſignature to which you have thrown open the folding-doors of your preſence chamber, and have uſhered into your national aſſembly with as much ceremony and parade, and with as great a buſtle of applauſe, as if you had been viſited by the whole repreſentative majeſty of the whole Engliſh nation. If what this ſociety has thought proper to ſend forth had been a piece of argument, it would have ſignified little whoſe

argument

argument it was. It would be neither the more nor the leſs convincing on account of the party it came from. But this is only a vote and reſolution. It ſtands ſolely on authority; and in this caſe it is the mere authority of individuals, few of whom appear. Their ſignatures ought, in my opinion, to have been annexed to their inſtrument. The world would then have the means of knowing how many they are; who they are; and of what value their opinions may be, from their perſonal abilities, from their knowledge, their experience, or their lead and authority in this ſtate. To me, who am but a plain man, the proceeding looks a little too refined, and too ingenious; it has too much the air of a political ſtratagem, adopted for the ſake of giving, under a high-ſounding name, an importance to the publick declarations of this club, which, when the matter came to be cloſely inſpected, they did not altogether ſo well deſerve. It is a policy that has very much the complexion of a fraud.

I flatter myſelf that I love a manly, moral, regulated liberty as well as any gentleman of that ſociety, be he who he will; and perhaps I have given as good proofs of my attachment to that cauſe, in the whole courſe of my publick conduct. I think I envy liberty as little as they do, to any other nation. But I cannot ſtand forward, and give praiſe or blame to any thing which relates to

human actions, and human concerns, on a ſimple view of the object, as it ſtands ſtripped of every relation, in all the nakedneſs and ſolitude of metaphyſical abſtraction. Circumſtances (which with ſome gentlemen paſs for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its diſtinguiſhing colour, and diſcriminating effect. The circumſtances are what render every civil and political ſcheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abſtractedly ſpeaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common ſenſe, ten years ago, have felicitated France on her enjoyment of a government (for ſhe then had a government) without inquiry what the nature of that government was, or how it was adminiſtered? Can I now congratulate the ſame nation upon its freedom? Is it becauſe liberty in the abſtract may be claſſed amongſt the bleſſings of mankind, that I am ſeriouſly to felicitate a mad-man, who has eſcaped from the protecting reſtraint and wholeſome darkneſs of his cell, on his reſtoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty? Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer, who has broke priſon, upon the recovery of his natural rights? This would be to act over again the ſcene of the criminals condemned to the gallies, and their heroick deliverer, the metaphyſick knight of the ſorrowful countenance.

When I ſee the ſpirit of liberty in action, I ſee a ſtrong

ſtrong principle at work; and this, for a while, is all I can poſſibly know of it. The wild *gas*, the fixed air is plainly broke looſe: but we ought to ſuſpend our judgment until the firſt effervescence is a little ſubſided, till the liquor is cleared, and until we ſee ſomething deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy ſurface. I muſt be tolerably ſure, before I venture publickly to congratulate men upon a bleſſing, that they have really received one. Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver; and adulation is not of more ſervice to the people than to kings. I ſhould therefore ſuſpend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I was informed how it had been combined with government; with publick force; with the diſcipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-diſtributed revenue; with morality and religion; with ſolidity and property; with peace and order; with civil and ſocial manners. All theſe (in their way) are good things too; and, without them, liberty is not a benefit whilſt it laſts, and is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they pleaſe: we ought to ſee what it will pleaſe them to do, before we riſk congratulations, which may be ſoon turned into complaints. Prudence would dictate this in the caſe of ſeparate inſulated private men; but liberty, when men act in bodies, is

power. Conſiderate people, before they declare themſelves, will obſerve the uſe which is made of *power*; and particularly of ſo trying a thing as *new* power in *new* perſons, of whoſe principles, tempers, and diſpoſitions, they have little or no experience, and in ſituations, where thoſe who appear the moſt ſtirring in the ſcene may poſſibly not be the real movers.

All theſe conſiderations however were below the tranſcendental dignity of the revolution ſociety. Whilſt I continued in the country, from whence I had the honour of writing to you, I had but an imperfect idea of their tranſactions. On my coming to town, I ſent for an account of their proceedings, which had been publiſhed by their authority, containing a ſermon of Dr. Price, with the Duke de Rochefaucault's and the Archbiſhop of Aix's letter, and ſeveral other documents annexed. The whole of that publication, with the manifeſt deſign of connecting the affairs of France with thoſe of England, by drawing us into an imitation of the conduct of the national aſſembly, gave me a conſiderable degree of uneaſineſs. The effect of that conduct upon the power, credit, proſperity, and tranquillity of France, became every day more evident. The form of conſtitution to be ſettled, for its future polity, became more clear. We are now in a condition to diſcern, with tolerable exactneſs, the true nature of the object held

up

up to our imitation. If the prudence of reſerve and decorum dictates ſilence in ſome circumſtances, in others prudence of a higher order may juſtify us in ſpeaking our thoughts. The beginnings of confuſion with us in England are at preſent feeble enough; but with you, we have ſeen an infancy ſtill more feeble, growing by moments into a ſtrength to heap mountains upon mountains, and to wage war with heaven itſelf. Whenever our neighbour's houſe is on fire, it cannot be amiſs for the engines to play a little on our own. Better to be deſpiſed for too anxious apprehenſions, than ruined by too confident a ſecurity.

Solicitous chiefly for the peace of my own country, but by no means unconcerned for yours, I wiſh to communicate more largely, what was at firſt intended only for your private ſatisfaction. I ſhall ſtill keep your affairs in my eye, and continue to addreſs myſelf to you. Indulging myſelf in the freedom of epiſtolary intercourſe, I beg leave to throw out my thoughts, and expreſs my feelings, juſt as they ariſe in my mind, with very little attention to formal method. I ſet out with the proceedings of the revolution ſociety; but I ſhall not confine myſelf to them. Is it poſſible I ſhould? It looks to me as if I were in a great criſis, not of the affairs of France alone, but of all Europe, perhaps of more than Europe. All circumſtances taken together, the French revolution

is the moſt aſtoniſhing that has hitherto happened in the world. The moſt wonderful things are brought about in many inſtances by means the moſt abſurd and ridiculous; in the moſt ridiculous modes; and apparently, by the moſt contemptible inſtruments. Every thing ſeems out of nature in this ſtrange chaos of levity and ferocity, and of all ſorts of crimes jumbled together with all ſorts of follies. In viewing this monſtrous tragi-comick ſcene, the moſt oppoſite paſſions neceſſarily ſucceed, and ſometimes mix with each other in the mind; alternate contempt and indignation; alternate laughter and tears; alternate ſcorn and horrour.

It cannot however be denied, that to ſome this ſtrange ſcene appeared in quite another point of view. Into them it inſpired no other ſentiments than thoſe of exultation and rapture. They ſaw nothing in what has been done in France, but a firm and temperate exertion of freedom; ſo conſiſtent, on the whole, with morals and with piety, as to make it deſerving not only of the ſecular applauſe of daſhing Machiavelian politicians, but to render it a fit theme for all the devout effuſions of ſacred eloquence.

On the forenoon of the 4th of November laſt, Doctor Richard Price, a non-conforming miniſter of eminence, preached at the diſſenting meeting-houſe of the Old Jewry, to his club or ſociety, a very

very extraordinary miſcellaneous ſermon, in which there are ſome good moral and religious ſentiments, and not ill expreſſed, mixed up with a ſort of porridge of various political opinions and reflections: but the revolution in France is the grand ingredient in the cauldron. I conſider the addreſs tranſmitted by the revolution ſociety to the national aſſembly, through Earl Stanhope, as originating in the principles of the ſermon, and as a corollary from them. It was moved by the preacher of that diſcourſe. It was paſſed by thoſe who came reeking from the effect of the ſermon, without any cenſure or qualification, expreſſed or implied. If, however, any of the gentlemen concerned ſhall wiſh to ſeparate the ſermon from the reſolution, they know how to acknowledge the one, and to diſavow the other. They may do it: I cannot.

For my part, I looked on that ſermon as the publick declaration of a man much connected with literary caballers, and intriguing philoſophers; with political theologians, and theological politicians, both at home and abroad. I know they ſet him up as a ſort of oracle; becauſe, with the beſt intentions in the world, he naturally *philippizes*, and chaunts his prophetick ſong in exact uniſon with their deſigns.

That ſermon is in a ſtrain which I believe has not been heard in this kingdom, in any of the pulpits

pulpits which are tolerated or encouraged in it, ſince the year 1648, when a predeceſſor of Dr. Price, the Reverend Hugh Peters, made the vault of the king's own chapel at St. James's ring with the honour and privilege of the ſaints, who, with the "high praiſes of God in their mouths, and a "*two*-edged ſword in their hands, were to exe- "cute judgment on the heathen, and puniſh- "ments upon the *people*; to bind their *kings* with "chains, and their *nobles* with fetters of iron *." Few harangues from the pulpit, except in the days of your league in France, or in the days of our ſolemn league and covenant in England, have ever breathed leſs of the ſpirit of moderation than this lecture in the Old Jewry. Suppoſing, however, that ſomething like moderation were viſible in this political ſermon; yet politicks and the pulpit are terms that have little agreement. No ſound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of chriſtian charity. The cauſe of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confuſion of duties. Thoſe who quit their proper character, to aſſume what does not belong to them, are, for the greater part, ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they aſſume. Wholly unacquainted with the world in which they are ſo fond of med-

* Pſalm cxlix.

dling,

dling, and inexperienced in all its affairs, on which they pronounce with ſo much confidence, they have nothing of politicks but the paſſions they excite. Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the diſſenſions and animoſities of mankind.

This pulpit ſtyle, revived after ſo long a diſcontinuance, had to me the air of novelty, and of a novelty not wholly without danger. I do not charge this danger equally to every part of the diſcourſe. The hint given to a noble and reverend lay-divine, who is ſuppoſed high in office in one of our univerſities*, and other lay-divines "of *rank* and literature," may be proper and ſeaſonable, though ſomewhat new. If the noble *Seekers* ſhould find nothing to ſatisfy their pious fancies in the old ſtaple of the national church, or in all the rich variety to be found in the well-aſſorted warehouſes of the diſſenting congregations, Dr. Price adviſes them to improve upon non-conformity; and to ſet up, each of them, a ſeparate meeting-houſe upon his own particular principles†. It is ſomewhat remarkable that this reverend

* Diſcourſe on the Love of our Country, Nov. 4, 1789, by Dr. Richard Price, 3d edition, p. 17 and 18.

† "Thoſe who diſlike that mode of worſhip which is pre-"ſcribed by publick authority, ought, if they can find *no* wor-"ſhip *out* of the church which they approve, *to ſet up a ſepa-*"*rate worſhip for themſelves*; and by doing this, and giving an "example

reverend divine ſhould be ſo earneſt for ſetting up new churches, and ſo perfectly indifferent concerning the doctrine which may be taught in them. His zeal is of a curious character. It is not for the propagation of his own opinions, but of any opinions. It is not for the diffuſion of truth, but for the ſpreading of contradiction. Let the noble teachers but diſſent, it is no matter from whom or from what. This great point once ſecured, it is taken for granted their religion will be rational and manly. I doubt whether religion would reap all the benefits which the calculating divine computes from this "great company of "great preachers." It would certainly be a valuable addition of non-deſcripts to the ample collection of known claſſes, genera and ſpecies, which at preſent beautify the *hortus ſiccus* of diſſent. A ſermon from a noble duke, or a noble marquis, or a noble earl, or baron bold, would certainly increaſe and diverſify the amuſements of this town, which begins to grow ſat'ated with the uniform round of its vapid diſſipations. I ſhould only ſtipulate that theſe new *Meſs-Johns* in robes and coronets ſhould keep ſome ſort of bounds in the democratick and levelling principles which are expected from their titled pulpits. The new evangeliſts will,

"example of a rational and manly worſhip, men of *weight* "from their *rank* and literature may do the greateſt ſervice "to ſociety and the world." P. 18, Dr. Price's Sermon.

I dare

I dare ſay, diſappoint the hopes that are conceived of them. They will not become, literally as well as figuratively, polemick divines, nor be diſpoſed ſo to drill their congregations, that they may, as in former bleſſed times, preach their doctrines to regiments of dragoons, and corps of infantry and artillery. Such arrangements, however favourable to the cauſe of compulſory freedom, civil and religious, may not be equally conducive to the national tranquillity. Theſe few reſtrictions I hope are no great ſtretches of intolerance, no very violent exertions of deſpotiſm.

But I may ſay of our preacher, "*utinam nugis* "*tota illa dediſſet tempora ſævitiæ.*" All things in this his fulminating bull are not of ſo innoxious a tendency. His doctrines affect our conſtitution in its vital parts. He tells the revolution ſociety, in this political ſermon, that his majeſty "is almoſt "the *only* lawful king in the world, becauſe the "*only* one who owes his crown to *the choice of his* "*people.*" As to the kings of *the world*, all of whom (except one) this archpontiff of the *rights of men*, with all the plenitude, and with more than the boldneſs of the papal depoſing power in its meridian fervour of the twelfth century, puts into one ſweeping clauſe of ban and anathema, and proclaims uſurpers by circles of longitude and latitude, over the whole globe, it behoves them to conſider how they admit into their territories

theſe

theſe apoſtolick miſſionaries, who are to tell their ſubjects they are not lawful kings. That is their concern. It is ours as a domeſtick intereſt of ſome moment, ſeriouſly to conſider the ſolidity of the *only* principle upon which theſe gentlemen acknowledge a king of Great Britain to be entitled to their allegiance.

This doctrine, as applied to the prince now on the Britiſh throne, either is nonſenſe, and therefore neither true nor falſe, or it affirms a moſt unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconſtitutional poſition. According to this ſpiritual doctor of politicks, if his majeſty does not owe his crown to the choice of his people, he is no *lawful king*. Now nothing can be more untrue than that the crown of this kingdom is ſo held by his majeſty. Therefore if you follow their rule, the king of Great Britain, who moſt certainly does not owe his high office to any form of popular election, is in no reſpect better than the reſt of the gang of uſurpers, who reign, or rather rob, all over the face of this our miſerable world, without any ſort of right or title to the allegiance of their people. The policy of this general doctrine, ſo qualified, is evident enough. The propagators of this political goſpel are in hopes their abſtract principle (their principle that a popular choice is neceſſary to the legal exiſtence of the ſovereign magiſtracy) would be overlooked, whilſt the king of Great Britain was not

affected by it. In the mean time the ears of their congregations would be gradually habituated to it, as if it were a firſt principle admitted without diſpute. For the preſent it would only operate as a theory, pickled in the preſerving juices of pulpit eloquence, and laid by for future uſe. *Condo et compono quæ mox depromere poſſim.* By this policy, whilſt our government is ſoothed with a reſervation in its favour, to which it has no claim, the ſecurity, which it has in common with all governments, ſo far as opinion is ſecurity, is taken away.

Thus theſe politicians proceed, whilſt little notice is taken of their doctrines; but when they come to be examined upon the plain meaning of their words, and the direct tendency of their doctrines, then equivocations and ſlippery conſtructions come into play. When they ſay the king owes his crown to the choice of his people, and is therefore the only lawful ſovereign in the world, they will perhaps tell us they mean to ſay no more than that ſome of the king's predeceſſors have been called to the throne by ſome ſort of choice; and therefore he owes his crown to the choice of his people. Thus, by a miſerable ſubterfuge, they hope to render their propoſition ſafe, by rendering it nugatory. They are welcome to the aſylum they ſeek for their offence, ſince they take refuge in their folly. For, if you admit this interpretation, how does their idea of election differ from

our

our idea of inheritance? And how does the ſettlement of the crown in the Brunſwick line derived from James the firſt, come to legalize our monarchy, rather than that of any of the neighbouring countries? At ſome time or other, to be ſure, all the beginners of dynaſties were choſen by thoſe who called them to govern. There is ground enough for the opinion that all the kingdoms of Europe were at a remote period, elective, with more or fewer limitations in the objects of choice; but whatever kings might have been here or elſewhere, a thouſand years ago, or in whatever manner the ruling dynaſties of England or France may have begun, the king of Great Britain is at this day king by a fixed rule of ſucceſſion, according to the laws of his country: and whilſt the legal conditions of the compact of ſovereignty are performed by him (as they are performed) he holds his crown in contempt of the choice of the revolution ſociety, who have not a ſingle vote for a king amongſt them, either individually or collectively; though I make no doubt they would ſoon erect themſelves into an electoral college, if things were ripe to give effect to their claim. His majeſty's heirs and ſucceſſors, each in his time and order, will come to the crown with the ſame contempt of their choice with which his majeſty has ſucceeded to that he wears.

Whatever may be the ſucceſs of evaſion, in explaining

plaining away the groſs errour of *fact*, which ſuppoſes that his majeſty (though he holds it in concurrence with the wiſhes) owes his crown to the choice of his people, yet nothing can evade their full explicit declaration, concerning the principle of a right in the people to chooſe, which right is directly maintained, and tenaciouſly adhered to. All the oblique inſinuations concerning election bottom in this propoſition, and are referable to it. Leſt the foundation of the king's excluſive legal title ſhould paſs for a mere rant of adulatory freedom, the political divine proceeds dogmatically to aſſert*, that by the principles of the revolution the people of England have acquired three fundamental rights, all of which, with him, compoſe one ſyſtem, and lie together in one ſhort ſentence; namely, that we have acquired a right

1. "To chooſe our own governours."
2. "To caſhier them for miſconduct."
3. "To frame a government for ourſelves."

This new, and hitherto unheard-of bill of rights, though made in the name of the whole people, belongs to thoſe gentlemen and their faction only. The body of the people of England have no ſhare in it. They utterly diſclaim it. They will reſiſt the practical aſſertion of it with their lives and

* P. 34, Diſcourſe on the Love of our Country, by Dr. Price.

fortunes. They are bound to do ſo by the laws of their country, made at the time of that very revolution, which is appealed to in favour of the fictitious rights claimed by the ſociety which abuſes its name.

Theſe gentlemen of the Old Jewry, in all their reaſonings on the revolution of 1688, have a revolution which happened in England about forty years before, and the late French revolution, ſo much before their eyes, and in their hearts, that they are conſtantly confounding all the three together. It is neceſſary that we ſhould ſeparate what they confound. We muſt recall their erring fancies to the *acts* of the revolution which we revere, for the diſcovery of its true *principles*. If the *principles* of the revolution of 1688 are any where to be found, it is in the ſtatute called the *Declaration of Right*. In that moſt wiſe, ſober, and conſiderate declaration, drawn up by great lawyers and great ſtateſmen, and not by warm and inexperienced enthuſiaſts, not one word is ſaid, nor one ſuggeſtion made, of a general right "to chooſe "our own *governours;* to caſhier them for miſcon-"duct; and to *form* a government for *ourſelves.*"

This declaration of right (the act of the 1ſt of William and Mary, ſeſſ. 2. ch. 2.) is the corner-ſtone of our conſtitution, as reinforced, explained, improved, and in its fundamental principles for

ever ſettled. It is called "An act for declaring "the rights and liberties of the ſubject, and for "*ſettling* the *ſucceſſion* of the crown." You will obſerve, that theſe rights and this ſucceſſion are declared in one body, and bound indiſſolubly together.

A few years after this period, a ſecond opportunity offered for aſſerting a right of election to the crown. On the proſpect of a total failure of iſſue from king William, and from the Princeſs, afterwards Queen Anne, the conſideration of the ſettlement of the crown, and of a further ſecurity for the liberties of the people, again came before the legiſlature. Did they this ſecond time make any proviſion for legaliſing the crown on the ſpurious revolution principles of the Old Jewry? No. They followed the principles which prevailed in the declaration of right; indicating with more preciſion the perſons who were to inherit in the proteſtant line. This act alſo incorporated, by the ſame policy, our liberties, and an hereditary ſucceſſion in the ſame act. Inſtead of a right to chooſe our own governours, they declared that the *ſucceſſion* in that line (the proteſtant line drawn from James the firſt) was abſolutely neceſſary "for "the peace, quiet, and ſecurity of the realm," and that it was equally urgent on them "to main-"tain a *certainty in the ſucceſſion* thereof, to which "the ſubjects may ſafely have recourſe for their

"protection." Both theſe acts, in which are heard the unerring, unambiguous oracles of revolution policy, inſtead of countenancing the deluſive, gipſey predictions of a "right to chooſe our gover-"nours," prove to a demonſtration how totally adverſe the wiſdom of the nation was from turning a caſe of neceſſity into a rule of law.

Unqueſtionably there was at the revolution, in the perſon of king William, a ſmall and a temporary deviation from the ſtrict order of a regular hereditary ſucceſſion; but it is againſt all genuine principles of juriſprudence to draw a principle from a law made in a ſpecial caſe, and regarding an individual perſon. *Privilegium non tranſit in exemplum.* If ever there was a time favourable for eſtabliſhing the principle, that a king of popular choice was the only legal king, without all doubt it was at the revolution. Its not being done at that time is a proof that the nation was of opinion it ought not to be done at any time. There is no perſon ſo completely ignorant of our hiſtory, as not to know, that the majority in parliament of both parties were ſo little diſpoſed to any thing reſembling that principle, that at firſt they were determined to place the vacant crown, not on the head of the prince of Orange, but on that of his wife Mary, daughter of king James, the eldeſt born of the iſſue of that king, which they acknowledged as undoubtedly his. It would be to repeat a very

a very trite ſtory, to recall to your memory all thoſe circumſtances which demonſtrated that their accepting king William was not properly a *choice;* but to all thoſe who did not wiſh, in effect, to recall king James, or to deluge their country in blood, and again to bring their religion, laws, and liberties into the peril they had juſt eſcaped, it was an act of *neceſſity*, in the ſtricteſt moral ſenſe in which neceſſity can be taken.

In the very act, in which for a time, and in a ſingle caſe, parliament departed from the ſtrict order of inheritance, in favour of a prince, who, though not next, was however very near in the line of ſucceſſion, it is curious to obſerve how lord Somers, who drew the bill called the Declaration of Right, has comported himſelf on that delicate occaſion. It is curious to obſerve with what addreſs this temporary ſolution of continuity is kept from the eye; whilſt all that could be found in this act of neceſſity to countenance the idea of an hereditary ſucceſſion is brought forward, and foſtered, and made the moſt of, by this great man, and by the legiſlature who followed him. Quitting the dry, imperative ſtyle of an act of parliament, he makes the lords and commons fall to a pious, legiſlative ejaculation, and declare, that they conſider it "as a marvellous "providence, and merciful goodneſs of God to "this nation, to preſerve their ſaid majeſties *royal*

"perſons, moſt happily to reign over us *on the* "*throne of their anceſtors*, for which, from the bot-"tom of their hearts, they return their humbleſt "thanks and praiſes."—The legiſlature plainly had in view the act of recognition of the firſt of queen Elizabeth, chap. 3d, and of that of James the firſt, chap. 1ſt, both acts ſtrongly declaratory of the inheritable nature of the crown, and in many parts they follow, with a nearly literal preciſion, the words and even the form of thankſgiving which is found in theſe old declaratory ſtatutes.

The two houſes, in the act of king William, did not thank God that they had found a fair opportunity to aſſert a right to chooſe their own governours, much leſs to make an election the *only lawful* title to the crown. Their having been in condition to avoid the very appearance of it, as much as poſſible, was by them conſidered as a providential eſcape. They threw a politick, well-wrought veil over every circumſtance tending to weaken the rights, which in the meliorated order of ſucceſſion they meant to perpetuate; or which might furniſh a precedent for any future departure from what they had then ſettled for ever. Accordingly, that they might not relax the nerves of their monarchy, and that they might preſerve a cloſe conformity to the practice of their anceſtors, as it appeared in the declaratory ſtatutes of queen Mary

Mary* and queen Elizabeth, in the next clauſe they veſt, by recognition, in their majeſties, *all* the legal prerogatives of the crown, declaring, "that in them they are moſt *fully*, rightfully, and "*intirely* inveſted, incorporated, united, and an- "nexed." In the clauſe which follows, for preventing queſtions, by reaſon of any pretended titles to the crown, they declare (obſerving alſo in this the traditionary language, along with the traditionary policy of the nation, and repeating as from a rubrick the language of the preceding acts of Elizabeth and James) that on the preſerving "a *certainty* in the SUCCESSION thereof, the unity, "peace, and tranquillity of this nation doth, un- "der God, wholly depend."

They knew that a doubtful title of ſucceſſion would but too much reſemble an election; and that an election would be utterly deſtructive of the "unity, peace, and tranquillity of this na- "tion," which they thought to be conſiderations of ſome moment. To provide for theſe objects, and therefore to exclude for ever the Old Jewry doctrine of "a right to chooſe our own gover- "nours," they follow with a clauſe, containing a moſt ſolemn pledge, taken from the preceding act of queen Elizabeth, as ſolemn a pledge as ever was or can be given in favour of an hereditary

* 1ſt Mary, ſeſſ. 3. ch. 1.

ſucceſſion, and as ſolemn a renunciation as could be made of the principles by this ſociety imputed to them. "The lords ſpiritual and temporal, and "commons, do, in the name of all the people "aforeſaid, moſt humbly and faithfully ſubmit "*themſelves, their heirs, and poſterities for ever;* "and do faithfully promiſe, that they will ſtand to, "maintain, and defend their ſaid majeſties, and "alſo the *limitation of the crown*, herein ſpecified "and contained, to the utmoſt of their powers," &c. &c.

So far is it from being true, that we acquired a right by the revolution to elect our kings, that if we had poſſeſſed it before, the Engliſh nation did at that time moſt ſolemnly renounce and abdicate it, for themſelves, and for all their poſterity for ever. Theſe gentlemen may value themſelves as much as they pleaſe on their whig principles; but I never deſire to be thought a better whig than lord Somers; or to underſtand the principles of the revolution better than thoſe by whom it was brought about; or to read in the declaration of right any myſteries unknown to thoſe whoſe penetrating ſtyle has engraved in our ordinances, and in our hearts, the words and ſpirit of that immortal law.

It is true that, aided with the powers derived from force and opportunity, the nation was at that time, in ſome ſenſe, free to take what courſe

it

it pleaſed for filling the throne; but only free to do ſo upon the ſame grounds on which they might have wholly aboliſhed their monarchy, and every other part of their conſtitution. However, they did not think ſuch bold changes within their commiſſion. It is indeed difficult, perhaps impoſſible, to give limits to the mere *abſtract* competence of the ſupreme power, ſuch as was exerciſed by parliament at that time; but the limits of a *moral* competence, ſubjecting, even in powers more indiſputably ſovereign, occaſional will to permanent reaſon, and to the ſteady maxims of faith, juſtice, and fixed fundamental policy, are perfectly intelligible, and perfectly binding upon thoſe who exerciſe any authority, under any name, or under any title, in the ſtate. The houſe of lords, for inſtance, is not morally competent to diſſolve the houſe of commons; no, nor even to diſſolve itſelf, nor to abdicate, if it would, its portion in the legiſlature of the kingdom. Though a king may abdicate for his own perſon, he cannot abdicate for the monarchy. By as ſtrong, or by a ſtronger reaſon, the houſe of commons cannot renounce its ſhare of authority. The engagement and pact of ſociety, which generally goes by the name of the conſtitution, forbids ſuch invaſion and ſuch ſurrender. The conſtituent parts of a ſtate are obliged to hold their publick faith with each other, and with all thoſe who derive any ſerious intereſt

under

under their engagements, as much as the whole ſtate is bound to keep its faith with ſeparate communities. Otherwiſe competence and power would ſoon be confounded, and no law be left but the will of a prevailing force. On this principle the ſucceſſion of the crown has always been what it now is, an hereditary ſucceſſion by law; in the old line it was a ſucceſſion by the common law; in the new by the ſtatute law, operating on the principles of the common law, not changing the ſubſtance, but regulating the mode, and deſcribing the perſons. Both theſe deſcriptions of law are of the ſame force, and are derived from an equal authority, emanating from the common agreement and original compact of the ſtate, *communi ſponſione reipublicæ*, and as ſuch are equally binding on king, and people too, as long as the terms are obſerved, and they continue the ſame body politick.

It is far from impoſſible to reconcile, if we do not ſuffer ourſelves to be entangled in the mazes of metaphyſick ſophiſtry, the uſe both of a fixed rule and an occaſional deviation; the ſacredneſs of an hereditary principle of ſucceſſion in our government, with a power of change in its application in caſes of extreme emergency. Even in that extremity (if we take the meaſure of our rights by our exerciſe of them at the revolution) the change is to be confined to the peccant part only; to the part which produced the neceſſary deviation; and even

even then it is to be effected without a decompoſition of the whole civil and political maſs, for the purpoſe of originating a new civil order out of the firſt elements of ſociety.

A ſtate without the means of ſome change is without the means of its conſervation. Without ſuch means it might even riſk the loſs of that part of the conſtitution which it wiſhed the moſt religiouſly to preſerve. The two principles of conſervation and correction operated ſtrongly at the two critical periods of the reſtoration and revolution, when England found itſelf without a king. At both thoſe periods the nation had loſt the bond of union in their ancient edifice; they did not, however, diſſolve the whole fabrick. On the contrary, in both caſes they regenerated the deficient part of the old conſtitution through the parts which were not impaired. They kept theſe old parts exactly as they were, that the part recovered might be ſuited to them. They acted by the ancient organiſed ſtates in the ſhape of their old organiſation, and not by the organick *moleculæ* of a diſbanded people. At no time, perhaps, did the ſovereign legiſlature manifeſt a more tender regard to that fundamental principle of Britiſh conſtitutional policy, than at the time of the revolution, when it deviated from the direct line of hereditary ſucceſſion. The crown was carried ſomewhat out of the line in which it had before moved;

but

but the new line was derived from the ſame ſtock. It was ſtill a line of hereditary deſcent; ſtill an hereditary deſcent in the ſame blood, though an hereditary deſcent qualified with proſtetantiſm. When the legiſlature altered the direction, but kept the principle, they ſhewed that they held it inviolable.

On this principle, the law of inheritance had admitted ſome amendment in the old time, and long before the æra of the revolution. Some time after the conqueſt great queſtions aroſe upon the legal principles of hereditary deſcent. It became a matter of doubt, whether the heir *per capita* or the heir *per ſtirpes* was to ſucceed; but whether the heir *per capita* gave way when the heirdom *per ſtirpes* took place, or the catholick heir when the proteſtant was preferred, the inheritable principle ſurvived with a ſort of immortality through all tranſmigrations—*multoſque per annos ſtat fortuna domus et avi numerantur avorum.* This is the ſpirit of our conſtitution, not only in its ſettled courſe, but in all its revolutions. Whoever came in, or however he came in, whether he obtained the crown by law, or by force, the hereditary ſucceſſion was either continued or adopted.

The gentlemen of the ſociety for revolutions ſee nothing in that of 1688 but the deviation from the conſtitution; and they take the deviation from the principle for the principle. They have little

little regard to the obvious conſequences of their doctrine, though they may ſee, that it leaves poſitive authority in very few of the poſitive inſtitutions of this country. When ſuch an unwarrantable maxim is once eſtabliſhed, that no throne is lawful but the elective, no one act of the princes who preceded this æra of fictitious election can be valid. Do theſe theoriſts mean to imitate ſome of their predeceſſors, who dragged the bodies of our ancient ſovereigns out of the quiet of their tombs? Do they mean to attaint and diſable backwards all the kings that have reigned before the revolution, and conſequently to ſtain the throne of England with the blot of a continual uſurpation? Do they mean to invalidate, annul, or to call into queſtion, together with the titles of the whole line of our kings, that great body of our ſtatute law which paſſed under thoſe whom they treat as uſurpers? to annul laws of ineſtimable value to our liberties—of as great value at leaſt as any which have paſſed at or ſince the period of the revolution? If kings who did not owe their crown to the choice of their people, had no title to make laws, what will become of the ſtatute *de tallagio non concedendo?* of the *petition of right?* of the act of *habeas corpus?* Do theſe new doctors of the rights of men preſume to aſſert, that King James the ſecond, who came to the crown as next of blood, according to the rules of a then unqualified

lified ſucceſſion, was not to all intents and purpoſes a lawful king of England, before he had done any of thoſe acts which were juſtly conſtrued into an abdication of his crown? If he was not, much trouble in parliament might have been ſaved at the period theſe gentlemen commemorate. But King James was a bad king with a good title, and not an uſurper. The princes who ſucceeded according to the act of parliament which ſettled the crown on the electreſs Sophia and on her deſcendants, being Proteſtants, came in as much by a title of inheritance as King James did. He came in according to the law, as it ſtood at his acceſſion to the crown; and the princes of the houſe of Brunſwick came to the inheritance of the crown, not by election, but by the law, as it ſtood at their ſeveral acceſſions of Proteſtant deſcent and inheritance, as I hope I have ſhewn ſufficiently.

The law by which this royal family is ſpecifically deſtined to the ſucceſſion, is the act of the 12th and 13th of King William. The terms of this act bind "us and our *heirs*, and our *poſterity*, to them, "their *heirs*, and their *poſterity*," being Proteſtants, to the end of time, in the ſame words as the declaration of right had bound us to the heirs of King William and Queen Mary. It therefore ſecures both an hereditary crown and an hereditary allegiance. On what ground, except the conſtitutional policy of forming an eſtabliſhment to ſecure

cure that kind of ſucceſſion which is to preclude a choice of the people for ever, could the legiſlature have faſtidiouſly rejected the fair and abundant choice which our own country preſented to them, and ſearched in ſtrange lands for a foreign princeſs, from whoſe womb the line of our future rulers were to derive their title to govern millions of men through a ſeries of ages?

The princeſs Sophia was named in the act of ſettlement of the 12th and 13th of King William, for a *ſtock* and root of *inheritance* to our kings, and not for her merits as a temporary adminiſtratrix of a power, which ſhe might not, and in fact did not, herſelf ever exerciſe. She was adopted for one reaſon, and for one only, becauſe, ſays the act, "the moſt excellent Princeſs Sophia, Electreſs "and Dutcheſs Dowager of Hanover, is *daughter* "of the moſt excellent Princeſs Elizabeth, late "Queen of Bohemia, *daughter* of our late *ſovereign* "*lord* King James the Firſt, of happy memory, "and is hereby declared to be the next in *ſucceſ-* "*ſion* in the Proteſtant line," &c. &c.; "and the "crown ſhall continue to the *heirs* of her body, "being Proteſtants." This limitation was made by parliament, that through the Princeſs Sophia an inheritable line not only was to be continued in future, but (what they thought very material) that through her it was to be connected with the old ſtock of inheritance in King James the Firſt;

in

in order that the monarchy might preſerve an unbroken unity through all ages, and might be preſerved (with ſafety to our religion) in the old approved mode by deſcent, in which, if our liberties had been once endangered, they had often, through all ſtorms and ſtruggles of prerogative and privilege, been preſerved. They did well. No experience has taught us, that in any other courſe or method than that of an *hereditary crown*, our liberties can be regularly perpetuated and preſerved ſacred as our *hereditary right*. An irregular, convulſive movement may be neceſſary to throw off an irregular, convulſive diſeaſe. But the courſe of ſucceſſion is the healthy habit of the Britiſh conſtitution. Was it that the legiſlature wanted, at the act for the limitation of the crown in the Hanoverian line, drawn through the female deſcendants of James the Firſt, a due ſenſe of the inconveniencies of having two or three, or poſſibly more foreigners in ſucceſſion to the Britiſh throne? No!—they had a due ſenſe of the evils which might happen from ſuch foreign rule, and more than a due ſenſe of them. But a more deciſive proof cannot be given of the full conviction of the Britiſh nation, that the principles of the revolution did not authorize them to elect kings at their pleaſure, and without any attention to the ancient fundamental principles of our government, than their continuing to adopt a plan of hereditary

tary Proteſtant ſucceſſion in the old line, with all the dangers and all the inconveniences of its being a foreign line full before their eyes, and operating with the utmoſt force upon their minds.

A few years ago I ſhould be aſhamed to overload a matter, ſo capable of ſupporting itſelf, by the then unneceſſary ſupport of any argument; but this ſeditious, unconſtitutional doctrine is now publickly taught, avowed, and printed. The diſlike I feel to revolutions, the ſignals for which have ſo often been given from pulpits; the ſpirit of change that is gone abroad; the total contempt which prevails with you, and may come to prevail with us, of all ancient inſtitutions, when ſet in oppoſition to a preſent ſenſe of convenience, or to the bent of a preſent inclination: all theſe conſiderations make it not unadviſeable, in my opinion, to call back our attention to the true principles of our own domeſtick laws; that you, my French friend, ſhould begin to know, and that we ſhould continue to cheriſh them. We ought not, on either ſide of the water, to ſuffer ourſelves to be impoſed upon by the counterfeit wares which ſome perſons, by a double fraud, export to you in illicit bottoms, as raw commodities of Britiſh growth, though wholly alien to our ſoil, in order afterwards to ſmuggle them back again into this country, manufactured after the neweſt Paris faſhion of an improved liberty.

The people of England will not ape the faſhions they have never tried: nor go back to thoſe which they have found miſchievous on trial. They look upon the legal hereditary ſucceſſion of their crown as among their rights, not as among their wrongs; as a benefit, not as a grievance; as a ſecurity for their liberty, not as a badge of ſervitude. They look on the frame of their commonwealth, *ſuch as it ſtands*, to be of ineſtimable value; and they conceive the undiſturbed ſucceſſion of the crown to be a pledge of the ſtability and perpetuity of all the other members of our conſtitution.

I ſhall beg leave, before I go any further, to take notice of ſome paltry artifices, which the abettors of election, as the only lawful title to the crown, are ready to employ, in order to render the ſupport of the juſt principles of our conſtitution a taſk ſomewhat invidious. Theſe ſophiſters ſubſtitute a fictitious cauſe, and feigned perſonages, in whoſe favour they ſuppoſe you engaged, whenever you defend the inheritable nature of the crown. It is common with them to diſpute as if they were in a conflict with ſome of thoſe exploded fanaticks of ſlavery, who formerly maintained, what I believe no creature now maintains, "that the crown is held by divine, hereditary, "and indefeaſible right."—Theſe old fanaticks of ſingle arbitrary power dogmatized as if hereditary royalty

royalty was the only lawful government in the world, juſt as our new fanaticks of popular arbitrary power, maintain that a popular election is the ſole lawful ſource of authority. The old prerogative enthuſiaſts, it is true, did ſpeculate fooliſhly, and perhaps impiouſly too, as if monarchy had more of a divine ſanction than any other mode of government; and as if a right to govern by inheritance were in ſtrictneſs *indefeaſible* in every perſon, who ſhould be found in the ſucceſſion to a throne, and under every circumſtance, which no civil or political right can be. But an abſurd opinion concerning the king's hereditary right to the crown does not prejudice one that is rational, and bottomed upon ſolid principles of law and policy. If all the abſurd theories of lawyers and divines were to vitiate the objects in which they are converſant, we ſhould have no law, and no religion, left in the world. But an abſurd theory on one ſide of a queſtion forms no juſtification for alleging a falſe fact, or promulgating miſchievous maxims on the other.

The ſecond claim of the revolution ſociety is "a right of caſhiering their governours for *miſcon-* "*duct.*" Perhaps the apprehenſions our anceſtors entertained of forming ſuch a precedent as that "of caſhiering for miſconduct," was the cauſe that the declaration of the act which implied the abdication of King James, was, if it had

any fault, rather too guarded, and too circumſtantial *. But all this guard, and all this accumulation of circumſtances, ſerves to ſhew the ſpirit of caution which predominated in the national councils, in a ſituation in which men irritated by oppreſſion, and elevated by a triumph over it, are apt to abandon themſelves to violent and extreme courſes: it ſhews the anxiety of the great men who influenced the conduct of affairs at that great event, to make the revolution, a parent of ſettlement, and not a nurſery of future revolutions.

No government could ſtand a moment, if it could be blown down with any thing ſo looſe and indefinite as an opinion of "*miſconduct.*" They who led at the revolution, grounded their virtual abdication of king James upon no ſuch light and uncertain principle. They charged him with nothing leſs than a deſign, confirmed by a multitude of illegal overt acts, to *ſubvert the Proteſtant church and ſtate* and their *fundamental*, unqueſtionable laws and liberties: they charged him with having broken the *original contract* between king and people. This was more than *miſconduct*. A grave

* "That king James the Second, having endeavoured to *ſubvert the conſtitution* of the kingdom, by breaking the *original* "*contract* between king and people, and by the advice of jeſuits, "and other wicked perſons, having violated the *fundamental* "laws, and *having withdrawn himſelf out of the kingdom* hath "*abdicated* the government, and the throne is thereby *vacant.*"

and

and overruling neceſſity obliged them to take the ſtep they took, and took with infinite reluctance, as under that moſt rigorous of all laws. Their truſt for the future preſervation of the conſtitution was not in future revolutions. The grand policy of all their regulations was to render it almoſt impracticable for any future ſovereign to compel the ſtates of the kingdom to have again recourſe to thoſe violent remedies. They left the crown what in the eye and eſtimation of law, it had ever been, perfectly irreſponſible. In order to lighten the crown ſtill further, they aggravated reſponſibility on miniſters of ſtate. By the ſtatute of the 1ſt of king William, ſeſſ. 2d, called "*the act for declaring* "*the rights and liberties of the ſubject, and for ſet-* "*tling the ſucceſſion of the crown,*" they enacted, that the miniſters ſhould ſerve the crown on the terms of that declaration. They ſecured ſoon after the *frequent meetings of parliament*, by which the whole government would be under the conſtant inſpection and active control of the popular repreſentative and of the magnates of the kingdom. In the next great conſtitutional act, that of the 12th and 13th of king William, for the further limitation of the crown, and *better* ſecuring the rights and liberties of the ſubject, they provided, "that "no pardon under the great ſeal of England "ſhould be pleadable to an impeachment by the "commons in parliament." The rule laid down

for government in the declaration of right, the conſtant inſpection of parliament, the practical claim of impeachment, they thought infinitely a better ſecurity not only for their conſtitutional liberty, but againſt the vices of adminiſtration, than the reſervation of a right ſo difficult in the practice, ſo uncertain in the iſſue, and often ſo miſchievous in the conſequences, as that of "ca-"ſhiering their governours."

Dr. Price, in this ſermon*, condemns very properly the practice of groſs adulatory addreſſes to kings. Inſtead of this fulſome ſtyle, he propoſes that his majeſty ſhould be told, on occaſions of congratulation, that "he is to conſider himſelf as "more properly the ſervant than the ſovereign of "his people." For a compliment, this new form of addreſs does not ſeem to be very ſoothing. Thoſe who are ſervants, in name, as well as in effect, do not like to be told of their ſituation, their duty, and their obligations. The ſlave, in the old play, tells his maſter, "*Hæc commemoratio eſt quaſi* "*exprobatio.*" It is not pleaſant as compliment; it is not wholeſome as inſtruction. After all, if the king were to bring himſelf to echo this new kind of addreſs, to adopt it in terms, and even to take the appellation of Servant of the People as his royal ſtyle, how either he or we ſhould be much

* P. 22, 23, 24.

mended

mended by it, I cannot imagine. I have ſeen very aſſuming letters, ſigned, Your moſt obedient, humble ſervant. The proudeſt domination that ever was endured on earth took a title of ſtill greater humility than that which is now propoſed for ſovereigns by the Apoſtle of Liberty. Kings and nations were trampled upon by the foot of one calling himſelf "the Servant of Servants;" and mandates for depoſing ſovereigns were ſealed with the ſignet of "the Fiſherman."

I ſhould have conſidered all this as no more than a ſort of flippant vain diſcourſe, in which, as in an unſavoury fume, ſeveral perſons ſuffer the ſpirit of liberty to evaporate, if it were not plainly in ſupport of the idea, and a part of the ſcheme of "caſhiering kings for miſconduct." In that light it is worth ſome obſervation.

Kings, in one ſenſe, are undoubtedly the ſervants of the people, becauſe their power has no other rational end than that of the general advantage; but it is not true that they are, in the ordinary ſenſe (by our conſtitution, at leaſt) any thing like ſervants; the eſſence of whoſe ſituation is to obey the commands of ſome other, and to be removeable at pleaſure. But the king of Great Britain obeys no other perſon; all other perſons are individually, and collectively too, under him, and owe to him a legal obedience. The law, which knows neither to flatter nor to inſult, calls

this high magiſtrate, not our ſervant, as this humble Divine calls him, but "*our ſovereign Lord the* "*King;*" and we, on our parts, have learned to ſpeak only the primitive language of the law, and not the confuſed jargon of their Babylonian pulpits.

As he is not to obey us, but as we are to obey the law in him, our conſtitution has made no ſort of proviſion towards rendering him, as a ſervant, in any degree reſponſible. Our conſtitution knows nothing of a magiſtrate like the *Juſticia* of Arragon; nor of any court legally appointed, nor of any proceſs legally ſettled for ſubmitting the king to the reſponſibility belonging to all ſervants. In this he is not diſtinguiſhed from the commons and the lords; who, in their ſeveral publick capacities, can never be called to an account for their conduct; although the revolution ſociety chooſes to aſſert, in direct oppoſition to one of the wiſeſt and moſt beautiful parts of our conſtitution, that "a "king is no more than the firſt ſervant of the pub-"lick, created by it, *and reſponſible to it.*"

Ill would our anceſtors at the revolution have deſerved their fame for wiſdom, if they had found no ſecurity for their freedom, but in rendering their government feeble in its operations, and precarious in its tenure; if they had been able to contrive no better remedy againſt arbitrary power than civil confuſion. Let theſe gentlemen ſtate who

who that *repreſentative* publick is to whom they will affirm the king, as a ſervant, to be reſponſible. It will be then time enough for me to produce to them the poſitive ſtatute law which affirms that he is not.

The ceremony of caſhiering kings, of which theſe gentlemen talk ſo much at their eaſe, can rarely, if ever, be performed without force. It then becomes a caſe of war, and not of conſtitution. Laws are commanded to hold their tongues amongſt arms; and tribunals fall to the ground with the peace they are no longer able to uphold. The revolution of 1688 was obtained by a juſt war, in the only caſe in which any war, and much more a civil war, can be juſt. "Juſta bella quibus "*neceſſaria.*" The queſtion of dethroning, or, if theſe gentlemen like the phraſe better, "caſhier-"ing kings," will always be, as it has always been, an extraordinary queſtion of ſtate, and wholly out of the law; a queſtion (like all other queſtions of ſtate) of diſpoſitions, and of means, and of probable conſequences, rather than of poſitive rights. As it was not made for common abuſes, ſo it is not to be agitated by common minds. The ſpeculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end, and reſiſtance muſt begin, is faint, obſcure, and not eaſily definable. It is not a ſingle act, or a ſingle event, which determines it. Governments muſt be abuſed

abuſed and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of; and the proſpect of the future muſt be as bad as the experience of the paſt. When things are in that lamentable condition, the nature of the diſeaſe is to indicate the remedy to thoſe whom nature has qualified to adminiſter in extremities this critical, ambiguous, bitter potion to a diſtempered ſtate. Times and occaſions, and provocations, will teach their own leſſons. The wiſe will determine from the gravity of the caſe; the irritable from ſenſibility to oppreſſion; the high-minded from diſdain and indignation at abuſive power in unworthy hands; the brave and bold from the love of honourable danger in a generous cauſe: but, with or without right, a revolution will be the very laſt reſource of the thinking and the good.

The third head of right, aſſerted by the pulpit of the Old Jewry, namely, the "right to form a "government for ourſelves," has, at leaſt, as little countenance from any thing done at the revolution, either in precedent or principle, as the two firſt of their claims. The revolution was made to preſerve our *ancient* indiſputable laws and liberties, and that *ancient* conſtitution of government which is our only ſecurity for law and liberty. If you are deſirous of knowing the ſpirit of our conſtitution, and the policy which predominated in that great period which has ſecured it to this hour, pray

look for both in our hiſtories, in our records, in our acts of parliament, and journals of parliament, and not in the ſermons of the Old Jewry, and the after-dinner toaſts of the revolution ſociety. In the former you will find other ideas and another language. Such a claim is as ill-ſuited to our temper and wiſhes as it is unſupported by any appearance of authority. The very idea of the fabrication of a new government, is enough to fill us with diſguſt and horrour. We wiſhed at the period of the revolution, and do now wiſh, to derive all we poſſeſs as *an inheritance from our forefathers.* Upon that body and ſtock of inheritance we have taken care not to inoculate any ſcion alien to the nature of the original plant. All the reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of reference to antiquity; and I hope, nay I am perſuaded, that all thoſe which poſſibly may be made hereafter, will be carefully formed upon analogical precedent, authority, and example.

Our oldeſt reformation is that of Magna Charta. You will ſee that Sir Edward Coke, that great oracle of our law, and indeed all the great men who follow him, to Blackſtone *, are induſtrious to prove the pedigree of our liberties. They endeavour to prove, that the ancient charter, the Magna Charta of king John, was connected with another

* See Blackſtone's Magna Charta, printed at Oxford, 1759.

poſitive

poſitive charter from Henry I. and that both the one and the other were nothing more than a re-affirmance of the ſtill more ancient ſtanding law of the kingdom. In the matter of fact, for the greater part, theſe authors appear to be in the right; perhaps not always: but if the lawyers miſtake in ſome particulars, it proves my poſition ſtill the more ſtrongly; becauſe it demonſtrates the powerful prepoſſeſſion towards antiquity, with which the minds of all our lawyers and legiſlators, and of all the people whom they wiſh to influence, have been always filled; and the ſtationary policy of this kingdom in conſidering their moſt ſacred rights and franchiſes as an *inheritance*.

In the famous law of the 3d of Charles I. called the *Petition of Right*, the parliament ſays to the king, "Your ſubjects have *inherited* this freedom," claiming their franchiſes not on abſtract principles "as the rights of men," but as the rights of Engliſhmen, and as a patrimony derived from their forefathers. Selden, and the other profoundly learned men, who drew this petition of right, were as well acquainted, at leaſt, with all the general theories concerning the "rights of men," as any of the diſcourſers in our pulpits, or on your tribune; full as well as Dr. Price, or as the Abbé Sieyes. But, for reaſons worthy of that practical wiſdom which ſuperſeded their theoretick ſcience, they preferred this poſitive, recorded, *hereditary* title

title to all which can be dear to the man and the citizen, to that vague ſpeculative right, which expoſed their ſure inheritance to be ſcrambled for and torn to pieces by every wild litigious ſpirit.

The ſame policy pervades all the laws which have ſince been made for the preſervation of our liberties. In the 1ſt of William and Mary, in the famous ſtatute, called the Declaration of Right, the two houſes utter not a ſyllable of "a right to "frame a government for themſelves." You will ſee, that their whole care was to ſecure the religion, laws, and liberties, that had been long poſſeſſed, and had been lately endangered. "Tak-"ing* into their moſt ſerious conſideration the "*beſt* means for making ſuch an eſtabliſhment, "that their religion, laws, and liberties, might not "be in danger of being again ſubverted," they auſpicate all their proceedings, by ſtating as ſome of thoſe *beſt* means, "in the *firſt place*" to do "as "their *anceſtors in like caſes have uſually* done "for vindicating their *ancient* rights and liberties, "to *declare*;"—and then they pray the king and queen, "that it may be *declared* and enacted, that "*all and ſingular* the rights and liberties *aſſerted* "*and declared* are the true *ancient* and indubitable "rights and liberties of the people of this king-"dom."

You will obſerve, that from magna charta to

* 1 W. and M.

the

the declaration of right, it has been the uniform policy of our conſtitution to claim and aſſert our liberties, as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be tranſmitted to our poſterity; as an eſtate ſpecially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our conſtitution preſerves an unity in ſo great a diverſity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and a houſe of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchiſes, and liberties, from a long line of anceſtors.

This policy appears to me to be the reſult of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wiſdom without reflection, and above it. A ſpirit of innovation is generally the reſult of a ſelfiſh temper and confined views. People will not look forward to poſterity, who never look backward to their anceſtors. Beſides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furniſhes a ſure principle of conſervation, and a ſure principle of tranſmiſſion; without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquiſition free; but it ſecures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a ſtate proceeding on theſe maxims, are locked faſt as in a ſort of family ſettlement; graſped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a conſtitutional

conſtitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we tranſmit our government and our privileges, in the ſame manner in which we enjoy and tranſmit our property and our lives. The inſtitutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are handed down, to us and from us, in the ſame courſe and order. Our political ſyſtem is placed in a juſt correſpondence and ſymmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of exiſtence decreed to a permanent body compoſed of tranſitory parts; wherein, by the diſpoſition of a ſtupendous wiſdom, moulding together the great myſterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable conſtancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progreſſion. Thus, by preſerving the method of nature in the conduct of the ſtate, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obſolete. By adhering in this manner and on thoſe principles to our forefathers, we are guided not by the ſuperſtition of antiquarians, but by the ſpirit of philoſophick analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the conſtitution of our country with our dearest domeſtick ties; adopting our fundamental

laws

laws into the boſom of our family affections; keeping inſeparable, and cheriſhing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our ſtate, our hearths, our ſepulchres, and our altars.

Through the ſame plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial inſtitutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful inſtincts, to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reaſon, we have derived ſeveral other, and thoſe no ſmall benefits, from conſidering our liberties in the light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the preſence of canonized forefathers, the ſpirit of freedom, leading in itſelf to miſrule and exceſs, is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea of a liberal deſcent inſpires us with a ſenſe of habitual native dignity, which prevents that upſtart inſolence almoſt inevitably adhering to and diſgracing thoſe who are the firſt acquirers of any diſtinction. By this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom. It carries an impoſing and majeſtick aſpect. It has a pedigree and illuſtrating anceſtors. It has its bearings and its enſigns armorial. It has its gallery of portraits; its monumental inſcriptions; its records, evidences, and titles. We procure reverence to our civil inſtitutions on the principle upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men; on account of their age; and on account of thoſe from whom they

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are deſcended. All your ſophiſters cannot produce any thing better adapted to preſerve a rational and manly freedom than the courſe that we have purſued, who have choſen our nature rather than our ſpeculations, our breaſts rather than our inventions, for the great conſervatories and magazines of our rights and privileges.

You might, if you pleaſed, have profited of our example, and have given to your recovered freedom a correſpondent dignity. Your privileges, though diſcontinued, were not loſt to memory. Your conſtitution, it is true, whilſt you were out of poſſeſſion, ſuffered waſte and dilapidation; but you poſſeſſed in ſome parts the walls, and in all the foundations of a noble and venerable caſtle. You might have repaired thoſe walls; you might have built on thoſe old foundations. Your conſtitution was ſuſpended before it was perfected; but you had the elements of a conſtitution very nearly as good as could be wiſhed. In your old ſtates you poſſeſſed that variety of parts correſponding with the various deſcriptions of which your community was happily compoſed; you had all that combination, and all that oppoſition of intereſts, you had that action and counteraction which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal ſtruggle of diſcordant powers, draws out the harmony of the univerſe. Theſe oppoſed and conflicting intereſts, which you con-

ſidered as ſo great a blemiſh in your old and in our preſent conſtitution, interpoſe a ſalutary check to all precipitate reſolutions. They render deliberation a matter not of choice, but of neceſſity; they make all change a ſubject of *compromiſe*, which naturally begets moderation; they produce *temperaments*, preventing the ſore evil of harſh, crude, unqualified reformations; and rendering all the headlong exertions of arbitrary power, in the few or in the many, for ever impracticable. Through that diverſity of members and intereſts, general liberty had as many ſecurities as there were ſeparate views in the ſeveral orders; whilſt by preſſing down the whole by the weight of a real monarchy, the ſeparate parts would have been prevented from warping and ſtarting from their allotted places.

You had all theſe advantages in your ancient ſtates; but you choſe to act as if you had never been moulded into civil ſociety, and had every thing to begin anew. You began ill, becauſe you began by deſpiſing every thing that belonged to you. You ſet up your trade without a capital. If the laſt generations of your country appeared without much luſtre in your eyes, you might have paſſed them by, and derived your claims from a more early race of anceſtors. Under a pious predilection for thoſe anceſtors, your imaginations would have realized in them a ſtandard of virtue

virtue and wiſdom, beyond the vulgar practice of the hour: and you would have riſen with the example to whoſe imitation you aſpired. Reſpecting your forefathers, you would have been taught to reſpect yourſelves. You would not have choſen to conſider the French as a people of yeſterday, as a nation of low-born ſervile wretches until the emancipating year of 1789. In order to furniſh, at the expence of your honour, an excuſe to your apologiſts here for ſeveral enormities of yours, you would not have been content to be repreſented as a gang of Maroon ſlaves, ſuddenly broke looſe from the houſe of bondage, and therefore to be pardoned for your abuſe of the liberty to which you were not accuſtomed, and were ill fitted. Would it not, my worthy friend, have been wiſer to have you thought, what I, for one, always thought you, a generous and gallant nation, long miſled to your diſadvantage by your high and romantick ſentiments of fidelity, honour, and loyalty; that events had been unfavourable to you, but that you were not enſlaved through any illiberal or ſervile diſpoſition; that in your moſt devoted ſubmiſſion, you were actuated by a principle of publick ſpirit, and that it was your country you worſhipped, in the perſon of your king? Had you made it to be underſtood, that in the deluſion of this amiable errour you had gone further than your wiſe anceſtors; that you were reſolved to reſume

your ancient privileges, whilſt you preſerved the ſpirit of your ancient and your recent loyalty and honour; or, if diffident of yourſelves, and not clearly diſcerning the almoſt obliterated conſtitution of your anceſtors, you had looked to your neighbours in this land, who had kept alive the ancient principles and models of the old common law of Europe meliorated and adapted to its preſent ſtate—by following wiſe examples you would have given new examples of wiſdom to the world. You would have rendered the cauſe of liberty venerable in the eyes of every worthy mind in every nation. You would have ſhamed deſpotiſm from the earth, by ſhewing that freedom was not only reconcileable, but as, when well diſciplined, it is, auxiliary to law. You would have had an unoppreſſive but a productive revenue. You would have had a flouriſhing commerce to feed it. You would have had a free conſtitution; a potent monarchy; a diſciplined army; a reformed and venerated clergy; a mitigated but ſpirited nobility, to lead your virtue, not to overlay it; you would have had a liberal order of commons, to emulate and to recruit that nobility; you would have had a protected, ſatisfied, laborious, and obedient people, taught to ſeek and to recognize the happineſs that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which conſiſts the true moral equality of mankind, and not in that monſtrous fiction, which, by in-

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ſpiring falſe ideas and vain expectations into men deſtined to travel in the obſcure walk of laborious life, ſerves only to aggravate and imbitter that real inequality, which it never can remove; and which the order of civil life eſtabliſhes as much for the benefit of thoſe whom it muſt leave in an humble ſtate, as thoſe whom it is able to exalt to a condition more ſplendid, but not more happy. You had a ſmooth and eaſy career of felicity and glory laid open to you, beyond any thing recorded in the hiſtory of the world; but you have ſhewn that difficulty is good for man.

Compute your gains: ſee what is got by thoſe extravagant and preſumptuous ſpeculations which have taught your leaders to deſpiſe all their predeceſſors, and all their contemporaries, and even to deſpiſe themſelves, until the moment in which they became truly deſpicable. By following thoſe falſe lights, France has bought undiſguiſed calamities at a higher price than any nation has purchaſed the moſt unequivocal bleſſings! France has bought poverty by crime! France has not ſacrificed her virtue to her intereſt; but ſhe has abandoned her intereſt, that ſhe might proſtitute her virtue. All other nations have begun the fabrick of a new government, or the reformation of an old, by eſtabliſhing originally, or by enforcing with greater exactneſs ſome rites or other of religion. All other people have laid the foundations

of civil freedom in ſeverer manners, and a ſyſtem of a more auſtere and maſculine morality. France, when ſhe let looſe the reins of regal authority, doubled the licence, of a ferocious diſſoluteneſs in manners, and of an inſolent irreligion in opinions and practices; and has extended through all ranks of life, as if ſhe were communicating ſome privilege, or laying open ſome ſecluded benefit, all the unhappy corruptions that uſually were the diſeaſe of wealth and power. This is one of the new principles of equality in France.

France, by the perfidy of her leaders, has utterly diſgraced the tone of lenient council in the cabinets of princes, and diſarmed it of its moſt potent topicks. She has ſanctified the dark ſuſpicious maxims of tyrannous diſtruſt; and taught kings to tremble at (what will hereafter be called) the deluſive plauſibilities, of moral politicians. Sovereigns will conſider thoſe who adviſe them to place an unlimited confidence in their people, as ſubverters of their thrones; as traitors who aim at their deſtruction, by leading their eaſy good-nature, under ſpecious pretences, to admit combinations of bold and faithleſs men into a participation of their power. This alone (if there were nothing elſe) is an irreparable calamity to you and to mankind. Remember that your parliament of Paris told your king, that in calling the ſtates together, he had nothing to fear but the prodigal

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exceſs of their zeal in providing for the ſupport of the throne. It is right that theſe men ſhould hide their heads. It is right that they ſhould bear their part in the ruin which their counſel has brought on their ſovereign and their country. Such ſanguine declarations tend to lull authority aſleep; to encourage it raſhly to engage in perilous adventures of untried policy; to neglect thoſe proviſions, preparations and precautions, which diſtinguiſh benevolence from imbecility; and without which no man can anſwer for the ſalutary effect of any abſtract plan of government or of freedom. For want of theſe, they have ſeen the medicine of the ſtate corrupted into its poiſon. They have ſeen the French rebel againſt a mild and lawful monarch, with more fury, outrage, and inſult, than ever any people has been known to riſe againſt the moſt illegal uſurper, or the moſt ſanguinary tyrant. Their reſiſtance was made to conceſſion; their revolt was from protection; their blow was aimed at a hand holding out graces, favours, and immunities.

This was unnatural. The reſt is in order. They have found their puniſhment in their ſucceſs. Laws overturned; tribunals ſubverted; induſtry without vigour; commerce expiring; the revenue unpaid, yet the people impoveriſhed; a church pillaged, and a ſtate not relieved; civil and military anarchy made the conſtitution of the king-

dom; every thing human and divine ſacrificed to the idol of publick credit, and national bankruptcy the conſequence; and to crown all, the paper ſecurities of new, precarious, tottering power, the diſcredited paper ſecurities of impoveriſhed fraud, and beggared rapine, held out as a currency for the ſupport of an empire, in lieu of the two great recognized ſpecies that repreſent the laſting conventional credit of mankind, which diſappeared and hid themſelves in the earth from whence they came, when the principle of property, whoſe creatures and repreſentatives they are, was ſyſtematically ſubverted.

Were all theſe dreadful things neceſſary? were they the inevitable reſults of the deſperate ſtruggle of determined patriots, compelled to wade through blood and tumult, to the quiet ſhore of a tranquil and proſperous liberty? No! nothing like it. The freſh ruins of France, which ſhock our feelings wherever we can turn our eyes, are not the devaſtation of civil war; they are the ſad but inſtructive monuments of raſh and ignorant counſel in time of profound peace. They are the diſplay of inconſiderate and preſumptuous, becauſe unreſiſted and irreſiſtible authority. The perſons who have thus ſquandered away the precious treaſure of their crimes, the perſons who have made this prodigal and wild waſte of publick evils (the laſt ſtake reſerved for the ultimate ranſom of the ſtate) have

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met in their progreſs with little, or rather with no oppoſition at all. Their whole march was more like a triumphal proceſſion than the progreſs of a war. Their pioneers have gone before them, and demoliſhed and laid every thing level at their feet. Not one drop of *their* blood have they ſhed in the cauſe of the country they have ruined. They have made no ſacrifices to their projects of greater conſequence than their ſhoe-buckles, whilſt they were impriſoning their king, murdering their fellow-citizens, and bathing in tears, and plunging in poverty and diſtreſs, thouſands of worthy men and worthy families. Their cruelty has not even been the baſe reſult of fear. It has been the effect of their ſenſe of perfect ſafety, in authorizing treaſons, robberies, rapes, aſſaſſinations, ſlaughters, and burnings, throughout their haraſſed land. But the cauſe of all was plain from the beginning.

This unforced choice, this fond election of evil, would appear perfectly unaccountable, if we did not conſider the compoſition of the national aſſembly: I do not mean its formal conſtitution, which as it now ſtands is exceptionable enough, but the materials of which, in a great meaſure, it is compoſed, which is of ten thouſand times greater conſequence than all the formalities in the world. If we were to know nothing of this aſſembly but by its title and function, no colours could paint to the imagination any thing more venerable. In that

light the mind of an inquirer, ſubdued by ſuch an awful image as that of the virtue and wiſdom of a whole people collected into one focus, would pauſe and heſitate in condemning things even of the very worſt aſpect. Inſtead of blameable, they would appear only myſterious. But no name, no power, no function, no artificial inſtitution whatſoever, can make the men of whom any ſyſtem of authority is compoſed, any other than God, and nature, and education, and their habits of life have made them. Capacities beyond theſe the people have not to give. Virtue and wiſdom may be the objects of their choice; but their choice confers neither the one nor the other on thoſe upon whom they lay their ordaining hands. They have not the engagement of nature, they have not the promiſe of revelation for any ſuch powers.

After I had read over the liſt of the perſons and deſcriptions elected into the *Tiers Etat*, nothing which they afterwards did could appear aſtoniſhing. Among them, indeed, I ſaw ſome of known rank; ſome of ſhining talents; but of any practical experience in the ſtate, not one man was to be found. The beſt were only men of theory. But whatever the diſtinguiſhed few may have been, it is the ſubſtance and maſs of the body which conſtitutes its character, and muſt finally determine its direction. In all bodies, thoſe who will lead, muſt alſo, in a conſiderable degree, follow.

low. They muſt conform their propoſitions to the taſte, talent, and diſpoſition of thoſe whom they wiſh to conduct: therefore, if an aſſembly is viciouſly or feebly compoſed in a very great part of it, nothing but ſuch a ſupreme degree of virtue as very rarely appears in the world, and for that reaſon cannot enter into calculation, will prevent the men of talents diſſeminated through it from becoming only the expert inſtruments of abſurd projects! If, what is the more likely event, inſtead of that unuſual degree of virtue, they ſhould be actuated by ſiniſter ambition, and a luſt of meretricious glory, then the feeble part of the aſſembly, to whom at firſt they conform, becomes in its turn the dupe and inſtrument of their deſigns. In this political traffick, the leaders will be obliged to bow to the ignorance of their followers, and the followers to become ſubſervient to the worſt deſigns of their leaders.

To ſecure any degree of ſobriety in the propoſitions made by the leaders in any publick aſſembly, they ought to reſpect, in ſome degree perhaps to fear, thoſe whom they conduct. To be led any otherwiſe than blindly, the followers muſt be qualified, if not for actors, at leaſt for judges; they muſt alſo be judges of natural weight and authority. Nothing can ſecure a ſteady and moderate conduct in ſuch aſſemblies, but that the body of them ſhould be reſpectably compoſed, in point of condition

condition in life, of permanent property, of education, and of ſuch habits as enlarge and liberaliſe the underſtanding.

In the calling of the ſtates general of France, the firſt thing that ſtruck me, was a great departure from the ancient courſe. I found the repreſentation for the third eſtate compoſed of ſix hundred perſons. They were equal in number to the repreſentatives of both the other orders. If the orders were to act ſeparately, the number would not, beyond the conſideration of the expence, be of much moment. But when it became apparent that the three orders were to be melted down into one, the policy and neceſſary effect of this numerous repreſentation became obvious. A very ſmall deſertion from either of the other two orders muſt throw the power of both into the hands of the third. In fact, the whole power of the ſtate was ſoon reſolved into that body. Its due compoſition became therefore of infinitely the greater importance.

Judge, Sir, of my ſurpriſe, when I found that a very great proportion of the aſſembly (a majority, I believe, of the members who attended) was compoſed of practitioners in the law. It was compoſed, not of diſtinguiſhed magiſtrates, who had given pledges to their country of their ſcience, prudence, and integrity; not of leading advocates, the glory of the bar; not of renowned profeſſors

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in univerſities;—but for the far greater part, as it muſt in ſuch a number, of the inferiour, unlearned, mechanical, merely inſtrumental members of the profeſſion. There were diſtinguiſhed exceptions; but the general compoſition was of obſcure provincial advocates, of ſtewards of petty local juriſdictions, country attornies, notaries, and the whole train of the miniſters of municipal litigation, the fomenters and conductors of the petty war of village vexation. From the moment I read the liſt, I ſaw diſtinctly, and very nearly as it has happened, all that was to follow.

The degree of eſtimation in which any profeſſion is held becomes the ſtandard of the eſtimation in which the profeſſors hold themſelves. Whatever the perſonal merits of many individual lawyers might have been, and in many it was undoubtedly very conſiderable, in that military kingdom no part of the profeſſion had been much regarded, except the higheſt of all, who often united to their profeſſional offices great family ſplendour, and were inveſted with great power and authority. Theſe certainly were highly reſpected, and even with no ſmall degree of awe. The next rank was not much eſteemed; the mechanical part was in a very low degree of repute.

Whenever the ſupreme authority is veſted in a body ſo compoſed, it muſt evidently produce the conſequences of ſupreme authority placed in the hands

hands of men not taught habitually to reſpect themſelves; who had no previous fortune in character at ſtake; who could not be expected to bear with moderation, or to conduct with diſcretion, a power, which they themſelves, more than any others, muſt be ſurpriſed to find in their hands. Who could flatter himſelf that theſe men, ſuddenly, and, as it were, by enchantment, ſnatched from the humbleſt rank of ſubordination, would not be intoxicated with their unprepared greatneſs? Who could conceive, that men, who are habitually meddling, daring, ſubtle, active, of litigious diſpoſitions and unquiet minds, would eaſily fall back into their old condition of obſcure contention, and laborious, low, and unprofitable chicane? Who could doubt but that, at any expence to the ſtate, of which they underſtood nothing, they muſt purſue their private intereſts, which they underſtood but too well? It was not an event depending on chance or contingency. It was inevitable; it was neceſſary; it was planted in the nature of things. They muſt *join* (if their capacity did not permit them to *lead*) in any project which could procure to them a *litigious conſtitution;* which could lay open to them thoſe innumerable lucrative jobs which follow in the train of all great convulſions and revolutions in the ſtate, and particularly in all great and violent permutations of property. Was it to be expected that they would attend

attend to the ſtability of property, whoſe exiſtence had always depended upon whatever rendered property queſtionable, ambiguous, and inſecure? Their objects would be enlarged with their elevation, but their diſpoſition and habits, and mode of accompliſhing their deſigns, muſt remain the ſame.

Well! but theſe men were to be tempered and reſtrained by other deſcriptions, of more ſober minds, and more enlarged underſtandings. Were they then to be awed by the ſuper-eminent authority and awful dignity of a handful of country clowns, who have ſeats in that aſſembly, ſome of whom are ſaid not to be able to read and write? and by not a greater number of traders, who, though ſomewhat more inſtructed, and more conſpicuous in the order of ſociety, had never known any thing beyond their counting-houſe? No! both theſe deſcriptions were more formed to be overborne and ſwayed by the intrigues and artifices of lawyers, than to become their counterpoiſe. With ſuch a dangerous diſproportion, the whole muſt needs be governed by them. To the faculty of law was joined a pretty conſiderable proportion of the faculty of medicine. This faculty had not, any more than that of the law, poſſeſſed in France its juſt eſtimation. Its profeſſors, therefore, muſt have the qualities of men not habituated to ſentiments of dignity. But ſuppoſing they had ranked

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as they ought to do, and as with us they do actually, the ſides of ſick beds are not the academies for forming ſtateſmen and legiſlators. Then came the dealers in ſtocks and funds, who muſt be eager, at any expence, to change their ideal paper wealth for the more ſolid ſubſtance of land. To theſe were joined men of other deſcriptions, from whom as little knowledge of or attention to the intereſts of a great ſtate was to be expected, and as little regard to the ſtability of any inſtitution; men formed to be inſtruments not controls. Such in general was the compoſition of the *Tiers Etat* in the national aſſembly; in which was ſcarcely to be perceived the ſlighteſt traces of what we call the natural landed intereſt of the country.

We know that the Britiſh houſe of commons, without ſhutting its doors to any merit in any claſs, is, by the ſure operation of adequate cauſes, filled with every thing illuſtrious in rank, in deſcent, in hereditary and in acquired opulence, in cultivated talents, in military, civil, naval, and politick diſtinction, that the country can afford. But ſuppoſing, what hardly can be ſuppoſed as a caſe, that the houſe of commons ſhould be compoſed in the ſame manner with the *Tiers Etat* in France, would this dominion of chicane be borne with patience, or even conceived without horrour? God forbid I ſhould inſinuate any thing derogatory to that profeſſion, which is another prieſthood, adminiſtering

miniſtering the rights of ſacred juſtice. But whilſt I revere men in the functions which belong to them, and would do, as much as one man can do, to prevent their excluſion from any, I cannot, to flatter them, give the lie to nature. They are good and uſeful in the compoſition; they muſt be miſchievous if they preponderate ſo as virtually to become the whole. Their very excellence in their peculiar functions may be far from a qualification for others. It cannot eſcape obſervation, that when men are too much confined to profeſſional and faculty habits, and, as it were, inveterate in the recurrent employment of that narrow circle, they are rather diſabled than qualified for whatever depends on the knowledge of mankind, on experience in mixed affairs, on a comprehenſive connected view of the various complicated external and internal intereſts which go to the formation of that multifarious thing called a ſtate.

After all, if the houſe of commons were to have an wholly profeſſional and faculty compoſition, what is the power of the houſe of commons, circumſcribed and ſhut in by the immoveable barriers of laws, uſages, poſitive rules of doctrine and practice, counterpoiſed by the houſe of lords, and every moment of its exiſtence at the diſcretion of the crown to continue, prorogue, or diſſolve us? The power of the houſe of commons, direct or indirect, is indeed great; and long may it be able

to preſerve its greatneſs, and the ſpirit belonging to true greatneſs, at the full; and it will do ſo, as long as it can keep the breakers of law in India from becoming the makers of law for England. The power, however, of the houſe of commons, when leaſt diminiſhed, is as a drop of water in the ocean, compared to that reſiding in a ſettled majority of your national aſſembly. That aſſembly, ſince the deſtruction of the orders, has no fundamental law, no ſtrict convention, no reſpected uſage to reſtrain it. Inſtead of finding themſelves obliged to conform to a fixed conſtitution, they have a power to make a conſtitution which ſhall conform to their deſigns. Nothing in heaven or upon earth can ſerve as a control on them. What ought to be the heads, the hearts, the diſpoſitions, that are qualified, or that dare, not only to make laws under a fixed conſtitution, but at one heat to ſtrike out a totally new conſtitution for a great kingdom, and in every part of it, from the monarch on the throne to the veſtry of a pariſh? But—"*fools ruſh in where angels fear to tread.*" In ſuch a ſtate of unbounded power, for undefined and undefinable purpoſes, the evil of a moral and almoſt phyſical inaptitude of the man to the function, muſt be the greateſt we can conceive to happen in the management of human affairs.

Having conſidered the compoſition of the third eſtate as it ſtood in its original frame, I took a

view of the repreſentatives of the clergy. There too it appeared, that full as little regard was had to the general ſecurity of property, or to the aptitude of the deputies for their publick purpoſes, in the principles of their election. That election was ſo contrived as to ſend a very large proportion of mere country curates to the great and arduous work of new-modelling a ſtate; men who never had ſeen the ſtate ſo much as in a picture; men who knew nothing of the world beyond the bounds of an obſcure village; who, immerſed in hopeleſs poverty, could regard all property, whether ſecular or eccleſiaſtical, with no other eye than that of envy; among whom muſt be many, who, for the ſmalleſt hope of the meaneſt dividend in plunder, would readily join in any attempts upon a body of wealth, in which they could hardly look to have any ſhare, except in a general ſcramble. Inſtead of balancing the power of the active chicaners in the other aſſembly, theſe curates muſt neceſſarily become the active coadjutors, or at beſt the paſſive inſtruments of thoſe by whom they had been habitually guided in their petty village concerns. They too could hardly be the moſt conſcientious of their kind, who, preſuming upon their incompetent underſtanding, could intrigue for a truſt which led them from their natural relation to their flocks, and their natural ſpheres of action, to undertake the regeneration of kingdoms.

This preponderating weight being added to the force of the body of chicane in the *Tiers Etat*, completed that momentum of ignorance, raſhneſs, preſumption, and luſt of plunder, which nothing has been able to reſiſt.

To obſerving men it muſt have appeared from the beginning, that the majority of the Third Eſtate, in conjunction with ſuch a deputation from the clergy as I have deſcribed, whilſt it purſued the deſtruction of the nobility, would inevitably become ſubſervient to the worſt deſigns of individuals in that claſs. In the ſpoil and humiliation of their own order theſe individuals would poſſeſs a ſure fund for the pay of their new followers. To ſquander away the objects which made the happineſs of their fellows, would be to them no ſacrifice at all. Turbulent, diſcontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with perſonal pride and arrogance, generally deſpiſe their own order. One of the firſt ſymptoms they diſcover of a ſelfiſh and miſchievous ambition, is a profligate diſregard of a dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to the ſubdiviſion, to love the little platoon we belong to in ſociety, is the firſt principle (the germ as it were) of publick affections. It is the firſt link in the ſeries by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind. The intereſt of that portion of ſocial arrangement is a truſt in the hands

hands of all thoſe who compoſe it; and as none but bad men would juſtify it in abuſe, none but traitors would barter it away for their own perſonal advantage.

There were, in the time of our civil troubles in England, (I do not know whether you have any ſuch in your aſſembly in France) ſeveral perſons, like the then earl of Holland, who by themſelves or their families had brought an odium on the throne, by the prodigal diſpenſation of its bounties towards them, who afterwards joined in the rebellions ariſing from the diſcontents of which they were themſelves the cauſe; men who helped to ſubvert that throne to which they owed, ſome of them, their exiſtence, others all that power which they employed to ruin their benefactor. If any bounds are ſet to the rapacious demands of that ſort of people, or that others are permitted to partake in the objects they would engroſs, revenge and envy ſoon fill up the craving void that is left in their avarice. Confounded by the complication of diſtempered paſſions, their reaſon is diſturbed; their views become vaſt and perplexed; to others inexplicable; to themſelves uncertain. They find, on all ſides, bounds to their unprincipled ambition in any fixed order of things. But in the fog and haze of confuſion all is enlarged, and appears without any limit.

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When men of rank ſacrifice all ideas of dignity to an ambition without a diſtinct object, and work with low inſtruments and for low ends, the whole compoſition becomes low and baſe. Does not ſomething like this now appear in France? Does it not produce ſomething ignoble and inglorious? a kind of meanneſs in all the prevalent policy? a tendency in all that is done to lower along with individuals all the dignity and importance of the ſtate? Other revolutions have been conducted by perſons, who whilſt they attempted or affected changes in the commonwealth, ſanctified their ambition by advancing the dignity of the people whoſe peace they troubled. They had long views. They aimed at the rule, not at the deſtruction of their country. They were men of great civil, and great military talents, and if the terrour, the ornament of their age. They were not like Jew brokers contending with each other who could beſt remedy with fraudulent circulation and depreciated paper the wretchedneſs and ruin brought on their country by their degenerate councils. The compliment made to one of the great bad men of the old ſtamp (Cromwell) by his kinſman, a favourite poet of that time, ſhews what it was he propoſed, and what indeed to a great degree he accompliſhed in the ſucceſs of his ambition:

"*Still*

" *Still as* you *riſe, the* ſtate *exalted too,*
" *Finds no diſtemper whilſt 'tis chang'd by* you;
" *Chang'd like the world's great ſcene, when without*
" *noiſe*
" *The riſing ſun night's* vulgar *lights deſtroys.*"

Theſe diſturbers were not ſo much like men uſurping power, as aſſerting their natural place in ſociety. Their riſing was to illuminate and beautify the world. Their conqueſt over their competitors was by outſhining them. The hand that, like a deſtroying angel, ſmote the country, communicated to it the force and energy under which it ſuffered. I do not ſay (God forbid) I do not ſay, that the virtues of ſuch men were to be taken as a balance to their crimes; but they were ſome corrective to their effects. Such was, as I ſaid, our Cromwell. Such were your whole race of Guiſes, Condés, and Colignis. Such the Richelieus, who in more quiet times acted in the ſpirit of a civil war. Such, as better men, and in a leſs dubious cauſe, were your Henry the Fourth and your Sully, though nurſed in civil confuſions, and not wholly without ſome of their taint. It is a thing to be wondered at, to ſee how very ſoon France, when ſhe had a moment to reſpire, recovered and emerged from the longeſt and moſt dreadful civil war that ever was known in any nation. Why? Becauſe, among all their maſſacres,

they had not ſlain the *mind* in their country. A conſcious dignity, a noble pride, a generous ſenſe of glory and emulation, was not extinguiſhed. On the contrary, it was kindled and inflamed. The organs alſo of the ſtate, however ſhattered, exiſted. All the prizes of honour and virtue, all the rewards, all the diſtinctions, remained. But your preſent confuſion, like a palſy, has attacked the fountain of life itſelf. Every perſon in your country, in a ſituation to be actuated by a principle of honour, is diſgraced and degraded, and can entertain no ſenſation of life, except in a mortified and humiliated indignation. But this generation will quickly paſs away. The next generation of the nobility will reſemble the artificers and clowns, and money-jobbers, uſurers, and Jews, who will be always their fellows, ſometimes their maſters. Believe me, Sir, thoſe who attempt to level, never equalize. In all ſocieties, conſiſting of various deſcriptions of citizens, ſome deſcription muſt be uppermoſt. The levellers therefore only change and pervert the natural order of things; they load the edifice of ſociety, by ſetting up in the air what the ſolidity of the ſtructure requires to be on the ground. The aſſociations of taylors and carpenters, of which the republick (of Paris, for inſtance) is compoſed, cannot be equal to the ſituation, into which, by the worſt of uſurpations, an uſurpation on the prerogatives of nature, you attempt to force them.

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The chancellor of France at the opening of the ſtates, ſaid, in a tone of oratorial flouriſh, that all occupations were honourable. If he meant only, that no honeſt employment was diſgraceful, he would not have gone beyond the truth. But in aſſerting, that any thing is honourable, we imply ſome diſtinction in its favour. The occupation of a hair-dreſſer, or of a working tallow-chandler, cannot be a matter of honour to any perſon—to ſay nothing of a number of other more ſervile employments. Such deſcriptions of men ought not to ſuffer oppreſſion from the ſtate; but the ſtate ſuffers oppreſſion, if ſuch as they, either individually or collectively, are permitted to rule. In this you think you are combating prejudice, but you are at war with nature *.

I do

* Eccleſiaſticus, chap. xxxviii. verſe 24, 25. "The wiſdom "of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leiſure: and he "that hath little buſineſs ſhall become wiſe."—"How can he "get wiſdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the "goad; that driveth oxen; and is occupied in their labours; "and whoſe talk is of bullocks?"

Ver. 27. "So every carpenter and work-maſter that labour-"eth night and day," &c.

Ver. 33. "They ſhall not be ſought for in publick counſel, "nor ſit high in the congregation: they ſhall not ſit on the "judges ſeat, nor underſtand the ſentence of judgment: they "cannot declare juſtice and judgment, and they ſhall not be "found where parables are ſpoken."

Ver. 34. "But they will maintain the ſtate of the world."

I do

I do not, my dear Sir, conceive you to be of that ſophiſtical captious ſpirit, or of that uncandid dulneſs, as to require, for every general obſervation or ſentiment, an explicit detail of the correctives and exceptions, which reaſon will preſume to be included in all the general propoſitions which come from reaſonable men. You do not imagine, that I wiſh to confine power, authority, and diſtinction to blood, and names, and titles. No, Sir. There is no qualification for government but virtue and wiſdom, actual or preſumptive. Wherever they are actually found, they have, in whatever ſtate, condition, profeſſion or trade, the paſſport of Heaven to human place and honour. Woe to the country which would madly and impiouſly reject the ſervice of the talents and virtues, civil, military, or religious, that are given to grace and to ſerve it; and would condemn to obſcurity every thing formed to diffuſe luſtre and glory around a ſtate. Woe to that country too, that paſſing into the oppoſite extreme, conſiders a low education, a mean contracted view of things, a ſordid, mercenary occupation, as a preferable title to command. Every thing ought to be open; but not indifferently to every man. No rotation; no appoint-

I do not determine whether this book be canonical, as the Gallican church (till lately) has conſidered it, or apocryphal, as here it is taken. I am ſure it contains a great deal of ſenſe and truth.

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ment by lot; no mode of election operating in the ſpirit of ſortition or rotation, can be generally good in a government converſant in extenſive objects. Becauſe they have no tendency, direct or indirect, to ſelect the man with a view to the duty, or to accommodate the one to the other. I do not heſitate to ſay, that the road to eminence and power, from obſcure condition, ought not to be made too eaſy, nor a thing too much of courſe. If rare merit be the rareſt of all rare things, it ought to paſs through ſome ſort of probation. The temple of honour ought to be ſeated on an eminence. If it be opened through virtue, let it be remembered too, that virtue is never tried but by ſome difficulty and ſome ſtruggle.

Nothing is a due and adequate repreſentation of a ſtate, that does not repreſent its ability, as well as its property. But as ability is a vigorous and active principle, and as property is ſluggiſh, inert and timid, it never can be ſafe from the invaſions of ability, unleſs it be, out of all proportion, predominant in the repreſentation. It muſt be repreſented too in great maſſes of accumulation, or it is not rightly protected. The characteriſtick eſſence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquiſition and conſervation, is to be *unequal*. The great maſſes therefore which excite envy, and tempt rapacity, muſt be put out of the poſſibility of danger. Then they form a natural rampart about

about the leſſer properties in all their gradations. The ſame quantity of property, which is by the natural courſe of things divided among many, has not the ſame operation. Its defenſive power is weakened as it is diffuſed. In this diffuſion each man's portion is leſs than what, in the eagerneſs of his deſires, he may flatter himſelf to obtain by diſſipating the accummulations of others. The plunder of the few would indeed give but a ſhare inconceivably ſmall in the diſtribution to the many. But the many are not capable of making this calculation; and thoſe who lead them to rapine, never intend this diſtribution.

The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the moſt valuable and intereſting circumſtances belonging to it, and that which tends the moſt to the perpetuation of ſociety itſelf. It makes our weakneſs ſubſervient to our virtue; it grafts benevolence even upon avarice. The poſſeſſors of family wealth, and of the diſtinction which attends hereditary poſſeſſion (as moſt concerned in it) are the natural ſecurities for this tranſmiſſion. With us, the houſe of peers is formed upon this principle. It is wholly compoſed of hereditary property and hereditary diſtinction; and made therefore the third of the legiſlature; and in the laſt event, the ſole judge of all property in all its ſubdiviſions. The houſe of commons too, though not neceſſarily, yet in fact, is always ſo compoſed

compoſed in the far greater part. Let thoſe large proprietors be what they will, and they have their chance of being amongſt the beſt, they are at the very worſt, the ballaſt in the veſſel of the commonwealth. For though hereditary wealth, and the rank which goes with it, are too much idolized by creeping ſycophants, and the blind abject admirers of power, they are too raſhly ſlighted in ſhallow ſpeculations of the petulant, aſſuming, ſhort-ſighted coxcombs of philoſophy. Some decent regulated pre-eminence, ſome preference (not excluſive appropriation) given to birth, is neither unnatural, nor unjuſt, nor impolitick.

It is ſaid, that twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thouſand. True; if the conſtitution of a kingdom be a problem of arithmetick. This ſort of diſcourſe does well enough with the lamp-poſt for its ſecond: to men who *may* reaſon calmly, it is ridiculous. The will of the many, and their intereſt, muſt very often differ; and great will be the difference when they make an evil choice. A government of five hundred country attornies and obſcure curates is not good for twenty-four millions of men, though it were choſen by eight and forty millions; nor is it the better for being guided by a dozen of perſons of quality, who have betrayed their truſt in order to obtain that power. At preſent, you ſeem in every thing to have ſtrayed out of the high road

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of nature. The property of France does not govern it. Of courſe property is deſtroyed, and rational liberty has no exiſtence. All you have got for the preſent is a paper circulation, and a ſtock-jobbing conſtitution: and as to the future, do you ſeriouſly think that the territory of France, upon the republican ſyſtem of eighty-three independent municipalities (to ſay nothing of the parts that compoſe them) can ever be governed as one body, or can ever be ſet in motion by the impulſe of one mind? When the national aſſembly has completed its work, it will have accompliſhed its ruin. Theſe commonwealths will not long bear a ſtate of ſubjection to the republick of Paris. They will not bear that this one body ſhould monopolize the captivity of the king, and the dominion over the aſſembly calling itſelf national. Each will keep its own portion of the ſpoil of the church to itſelf; and it will not ſuffer either that ſpoil, or the more juſt fruits of their induſtry, or the natural produce of their ſoil, to be ſent to ſwell the inſolence, or pamper the luxury, of the mechanics of Paris. In this they will ſee none of the equality, under the pretence of which they have been tempted to throw off their allegiance to their Sovereign, as well as the ancient conſtitution of their country. There can be no capital city in ſuch a conſtitution as they have lately made. They have forgot, that when they framed democratick governments, they had virtually

virtually diſmembered their country. The perſon whom they perſevere in calling king, has not power left to him by the hundredth part ſufficient to hold together this collection of republicks. The republick of Paris will endeavour indeed to complete the debauchery of the army, and illegally to perpetuate the aſſembly, without reſort to its conſtituents, as the means of continuing its deſpotiſm. It will make efforts, by becoming the heart of a boundleſs paper circulation, to draw every thing to itſelf; but in vain. All this policy in the end will appear as feeble as it is now violent.

If this be your actual ſituation, compared to the ſituation to which you were called, as it were by the voice of God and man, I cannot find it in my heart to congratulate you on the choice you have made, or the ſucceſs which has attended your endeavours. I can as little recommend to any other nation a conduct grounded on ſuch principles, and productive of ſuch effects. That I muſt leave to thoſe who can ſee further into your affairs than I am able to do, and who beſt know how far your actions are favourable to their deſigns. The gentlemen of the revolution ſociety, who were ſo early in their congratulations, appear to be ſtrongly of opinion that there is ſome ſcheme of politicks relative to this country, in which your proceedings may, in ſome way, be uſeful. For your Dr. Price, who ſeems to have ſpeculated himſelf into no ſmall degree

degree of fervour upon this ſubject, addreſſes his auditors in the following very remarkable words: "I cannot conclude without recalling *particularly* "to your recollection a conſideration which I have "*more than once alluded to*, and which probably "your thoughts have *been all along anticipating*; "a conſideration with which my *mind is impreſſed* "*more than I can expreſs*. I mean the conſidera- "tion of the *favourableneſs of the preſent times to* "*all exertions in the cauſe of liberty*."

It is plain that the mind of this *political* preacher was at the time big with ſome extraordinary deſign; and it is very probable that the thoughts of his audience, who underſtood him better than I do, did all along run before him in his reflection, and in the whole train of conſequences to which it led.

Before I read that ſermon, I really thought I had lived in a free country; and it was an errour I cheriſhed, becauſe it gave me a greater liking to the country I lived in. I was indeed aware, that a jealous, ever-waking vigilance, to guard the treaſure of our liberty, not only from invaſion, but from decay and corruption, was our beſt wiſdom and our firſt duty. However, I conſidered that treaſure rather as a poſſeſſion to be ſecured than as a prize to be contended for. I did not diſcern how the preſent time came to be ſo very favourable to all *exertions* in the cauſe of freedom. The

preſent time differs from any other only by the circumſtance of what is doing in France. If the example of that nation is to have an influence on this, I can eaſily conceive why ſome of their proceedings which have an unpleaſant aſpect, and are not quite reconcileable to humanity, generoſity, good faith, and juſtice, are palliated with ſo much milky good-nature towards the actors, and borne with ſo much heroick fortitude towards the ſufferers. It is certainly not prudent to diſcredit the authority of an example we mean to follow. But allowing this, we are led to a very natural queſtion;—What is that cauſe of liberty, and what are thoſe exertions in its favour, to which the example of France is ſo ſingularly auſpicious? Is our monarchy to be annihilated, with all the laws, all the tribunals, and all the ancient corporations of the kingdom? Is every land-mark of the country to be done away in favour of a geometrical and arithmetical conſtitution? Is the houſe of lords to be voted uſeleſs? Is epiſcopacy to be aboliſhed? Are the church lands to be ſold to Jews and jobbers; or given to bribe new-invented municipal republicks into a participation in ſacrilege? Are all the taxes to be voted grievances, and the revenue reduced to a patriotick contribution, or patriotick preſents? Are ſilver ſhoe-buckles to be ſubſtituted in the place of the land tax and the malt tax, for the ſupport of the naval ſtrength of this kingdom?

Are all orders, ranks, and diſtinctions to be confounded, that out of univerſal anarchy, joined to national bankruptcy, three or four thouſand democracies ſhould be formed into eighty-three, and that they may all, by ſome ſort of unknown attractive power, be organized into one? For this great end is the army to be ſeduced from its diſcipline and its fidelity, firſt by every kind of debauchery, and then by the terrible precedent of a donative in the increaſe of pay? Are the curates to be ſeduced from their biſhops, by holding out to them the deluſive hope of a dole out of the ſpoils of their own order? Are the citizens of London to be drawn from their allegiance by feeding them at the expence of their fellow-ſubjects? Is a compulſory paper currency to be ſubſtituted in the place of the legal coin of this kingdom? Is what remains of the plundered ſtock of publick revenue to be employed in the wild project of maintaining two armies to watch over and to fight with each other? If theſe are the ends and means of the revolution ſociety, I admit they are well aſſorted; and France may furniſh them for both with precedents in point.

I ſee that your example is held out to ſhame us. I know that we are ſuppoſed a dull ſluggiſh race, rendered paſſive by finding our ſituation tolerable, and prevented by a mediocrity of freedom from ever attaining to its full perfection. Your leaders

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in France began by affecting to admire, almoſt to adore, the Britiſh conſtitution; but as they advanced, they came to look upon it with a ſovereign contempt. The friends of your national aſſembly amongſt us have full as mean an opinion of what was formerly thought the glory of their country. The revolution ſociety has diſcovered that the Engliſh nation is not free. They are convinced that the inequality in our repreſentation is a "defect in our conſtitution *ſo groſs and palpable*, as to make it excellent chiefly in *form* and "*theory**." That a repreſentation in the legiſlature of a kingdom is not only the baſis of all conſtitutional liberty in it, but of "*all legitimate government*; that without it a *government* is nothing but an *uſurpation*;"—that "when the repreſentation is *partial*, the kingdom poſſeſſes liberty only *partially*; and if extremely partial, "it gives only a *ſemblance*; and if not only extremely partial, but corruptly choſen, it becomes "a *nuiſance*." Dr. Price conſiders this inadequacy of repreſentation as our *fundamental grievance*; and though, as to the corruption of this ſemblance of repreſentation, he hopes it is not yet arrived to its full perfection of depravity; he fears that "nothing will be done towards gaining for us "this *eſſential bleſſing*, until ſome *great abuſe of*

* Diſcourſe on the Love of our Country, 3d edit. p. 39.

" *power* again provokes our reſentment, or ſome
" *great calamity* again alarms our fears, or perhaps
" till the acquiſition of a *pure and equal repreſenta-*
" *tion by other countries*, whilſt we are *mocked* with
" the *ſhadow*, kindles our ſhame." To this he ſubjoins a note in theſe words. " A repreſenta-
" tion choſen chiefly by the treaſury, and a *few*
" thouſands of the *dregs* of the people, who are
" generally paid for their votes."

You will ſmile here at the conſiſtency of thoſe democratiſts, who, when they are not on their guard, treat the humbler part of the community with the greateſt contempt, whilſt, at the ſame time, they pretend to make them the depoſitories of all power. It would require a long diſcourſe to point out to you the many fallacies that lurk in the generality and equivocal nature of the terms " inadequate repreſentation." I ſhall only ſay here, in juſtice to that old faſhioned conſtitution, under which we have long proſpered, that our repreſentation has been found perfectly adequate to all the purpoſes for which a repreſentation of the people can be deſired or deviſed. I defy the enemies of our conſtitution to ſhew the contrary. To detail the particulars in which it is found ſo well to promote its ends, would demand a treatiſe on our practical conſtitution. I ſtate here the doctrine of the revolutioniſts, only that you and others may ſee, what an opinion theſe gentlemen entertain

entertain of the conſtitution of their country, and why they ſeem to think that ſome great abuſe of power, or ſome great calamity, as giving a chance for the bleſſing of a conſtitution according to their ideas, would be much palliated to their feelings; you ſee *why they* are ſo much enamoured of your fair and equal repreſentation, which being once obtained, the ſame effects might follow. You ſee they conſider our houſe of commons as only "a "ſemblance," "a form," "a theory," "a ſha-"dow," "a mockery," perhaps "a nuiſance."

Theſe gentlemen value themſelves on being ſyſtematick; and not without reaſon. They muſt therefore look on this groſs and palpable defect of repreſentation, this fundamental grievance (ſo they call it) as a thing not only vicious in itſelf, but as rendering our whole government abſolutely *illegitimate*, and not at all better than a downright *uſurpation*. Another revolution to get rid of this illegitimate and uſurped government, would of courſe be perfectly juſtifiable, if not abſolutely neceſſary. Indeed their principle, if you obſerve it with any attention, goes much further than to an alteration in the election of the houſe of commons; for, if popular repreſentation, or choice, is neceſſary to the *legitimacy* of all government, the houſe of lords is, at one ſtroke, baſtardized and corrupted in blood. That houſe is no repreſentative of the people at all, even in "ſemblance or

"in form." The caſe of the crown is altogether as bad. In vain the crown may endeavour to ſcreen itſelf againſt theſe gentlemen by the authority of the eſtabliſhment made on the revolution. The revolution which is reſorted to for a title, on their ſyſtem, wants a title itſelf. The revolution is built, according to their theory, upon a baſis not more ſolid than our preſent formalities, as it was made by a houſe of lords, not repreſenting any one but themſelves; and by a houſe of commons exactly ſuch as the preſent, that is, as they term it, by a mere "ſhadow and mockery" of repreſentation.

Something they muſt deſtroy, or they ſeem to themſelves to exiſt for no purpoſe. One ſet is for deſtroying the civil power through the eccleſiaſtical; another for demoliſhing the eccleſiaſtick through the civil. They are aware that the worſt conſequences might happen to the publick in accompliſhing this double ruin of church and ſtate; but they are ſo heated with their theories, that they give more than hints, that this ruin, with all the miſchiefs that muſt lead to it and attend it, and which to themſelves appear quite certain, would not be unacceptable to them, or very remote from their wiſhes. A man amongſt them of great authority, and certainly of great talents, ſpeaking of a ſuppoſed alliance between church and ſtate, ſays, "perhaps *we muſt wait for the fall*

"*of*

" *of the civil powers* before this moſt unnatural " alliance be broken. Calamitous no doubt will " that time be. But what convulſion in the po- " litical world ought to be a ſubject of lamenta- " tion, if it be attended with ſo deſirable an ef- " fect?" You ſee with what a ſteady eye theſe gentlemen are prepared to view the greateſt calamities which can befall their country!

It is no wonder therefore, that with theſe ideas of every thing in their conſtitution and government at home, either in church or ſtate, as illegitimate and uſurped, or, at beſt as a vain mockery, they look abroad with an eager and paſſionate enthuſiaſm. Whilſt they are poſſeſſed by theſe notions, it is vain to talk to them of the practice of their anceſtors, the fundamental laws of their country, the fixed form of a conſtitution, whoſe merits are confirmed by the ſolid teſt of long experience, and an encreaſing publick ſtrength and national proſperity. They deſpiſe experience as the wiſdom of unlettered men; and as for the reſt, they have wrought under-ground a mine that will blow up at one grand exploſion all examples of antiquity, all precedents, charters, and acts of parliament. They have " the rights of men." Againſt theſe there can be no preſcription; againſt theſe no argument is binding: theſe admit no temperament, and no compromiſe: any thing withheld from their full demand is ſo much of fraud and

injuſtice. Againſt theſe their rights of men let no government look for ſecurity in the length of its continuance, or in the juſtice and lenity of its adminiſtration. The objections of theſe ſpeculatiſts, if its forms do not quadrate with their theories, are as valid againſt ſuch an old and beneficent government as againſt the moſt violent tyranny, or the greeneſt uſurpation. They are always at iſſue with governments, not on a queſtion of abuſe, but a queſtion of competency, and a queſtion of title. I have nothing to ſay to the clumſy ſubtilty of their political metaphyſicks. Let them be their amuſement in the ſchools.—"Illa *ſe jactat in aula*—"*Æolus, et clauſo ventorum carcere regnet.*"—But let them not break priſon to burſt like a *Levanter*, to ſweep the earth with their hurricane, and to break up the fountains of the great deep to overwhelm us.

Far am I from denying in theory; full as far is my heart from withholding in practice (if I were of power to give or to withhold) the *real* rights of men. In denying their falſe claims of right, I do not mean to injure thoſe which are real, and are ſuch as their pretended rights would totally deſtroy. If civil ſociety be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right. It is an inſtitution of beneficence; and law itſelf is only beneficence acting by a rule. Men have a right to live by that rule; they

they have a right to do juſtice; as between their fellows, whether their fellows are in politick function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their induſtry; and to the means of making their induſtry fruitful. They have a right to the acquiſitions of their parents; to the nouriſhment and improvement of their offspring; to inſtruction in life, and to conſolation in death. Whatever each man can ſeparately do, without treſpaſſing upon others, he has a right to do for himſelf; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which ſociety, with all its combinations of ſkill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnerſhip all men have equal rights; but not to equal things. He that has but five ſhillings in the partnerſhip, has as good a right to it, as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger proportion. But he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint ſtock; and as to the ſhare of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the ſtate, that I muſt deny to be amongſt the direct original rights of man in civil ſociety; for I have in my contemplation the civil ſocial man, and no other. It is a thing to be ſettled by convention.

If civil ſociety be the offspring of convention, that convention muſt be its law. That convention muſt limit and modify all the deſcriptions of conſtitution which are formed under it. Every

ſort

ſort of legiſlature, judicial, or executory power, are its creatures. They can have no being in any other ſtate of things; and how can any man claim, under the conventions of civil ſociety, rights which do not ſo much as ſuppoſe its exiſtence? Rights which are abſolutely repugnant to it? One of the firſt motives to civil ſociety, and which becomes one of its fundamental rules, is, *that no man ſhould be judge in his own cauſe.* By this each perſon has at once diveſted himſelf of the firſt fundamental right of uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himſelf, and to aſſert his own cauſe. He abdicates all right to be his own governour. He incluſively, in a great meaſure abandons the right of ſelf-defence, the firſt law of nature. Men cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and of a civil ſtate together. That he may obtain juſtice, he gives up his right of determining, what it is in points the moſt eſſential to him. That he may ſecure ſome liberty, he makes a ſurrender in truſt of the whole of it.

Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exiſt in total independence of it; and exiſt in much greater clearneſs, and in a much greater degree of abſtract perfection: but their abſtract perfection is their practical defect. By having a right to every thing they want every thing. Government is a contrivance of human wiſdom to provide for human *wants.*

Men

Men have a right that theſe wants ſhould be provided for by this wiſdom. Among theſe wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil ſociety, of a ſufficient reſtraint upon their paſſions. Society requires not only that the paſſions of individuals ſhould be ſubjected, but that even in the maſs and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men ſhould frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their paſſions brought into ſubjection. This can only be done *by a power out of themſelves;* and not, in the exerciſe of its function, ſubject to that will and to thoſe paſſions which it is its office to bridle and ſubdue. In this ſenſe the reſtraints on men as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights. But as the liberties and the reſtrictions vary with times and circumſtances, and admit of infinite modifications, they cannot be ſettled upon any abſtract rule; and nothing is ſo fooliſh as to diſcuſs them upon that principle.

The moment you abate any thing from the full rights of men, each to govern himſelf, and ſuffer any artificial poſitive limitation upon thoſe rights, from that moment the whole organization of government becomes a conſideration of convenience. This it is which makes the conſtitution of a ſtate, and the due diſtribution of its powers, a matter of the moſt delicate and complicated ſkill. It requires a deep knowledge of human nature and human

man neceſſities, and of the things which facilitate or obſtruct the various ends which are to be purſued by the mechaniſm of civil inſtitutions. The ſtate is to have recruits to its ſtrength, and remedies to its diſtempers. What is the uſe of diſcuſſing a man's abſtract right to food or medicine? The queſtion is upon the method of procuring and adminiſtering them. In that deliberation I ſhall always adviſe to call in the aid of the farmer and the phyſician, rather than the profeſſor of metaphyſicks.

The ſcience of conſtructing a commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental ſcience, not to be taught *à priori*. Nor is it a ſhort experience that can inſtruct us in that practical ſcience; becauſe the real effects of moral cauſes are not always immediate; but that which in the firſt inſtance is prejudicial may be excellent in its remoter operation; and its excellence may ariſe even from the ill effects it produces in the beginning. The reverſe alſo happens; and very plauſible ſchemes, with very pleaſing commencements, have often ſhameful and lamentable concluſions. It ſtates there are often ſome obſcure and almoſt latent cauſes, things which appear at firſt view of little moment, on which a very great part of its proſperity or adverſity may moſt eſſentially depend. The ſcience of government being therefore ſo practical in itſelf, and intended for

for ſuch practical purpoſes, a matter which requires experience, and even more experience than any perſon can gain in his whole life, however ſagacious and obſerving he may be, it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has anſwered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purpoſes of ſociety, or on building it up again, without having models and patterns of approved utility before his eyes.

Theſe metaphyſick rights entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a denſe medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their ſtraight line. Indeed in the groſs and complicated maſs of human paſſions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo ſuch a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes abſurd to talk of them as if they continued in the ſimplicity of their original direction. The nature of man is intricate; the objects of ſociety are of the greateſt poſſible complexity; and therefore no ſimple diſpoſition or direction of power can be ſuitable either to man's nature, or to the quality of his affairs. When I hear the ſimplicity of contrivance aimed at and boaſted of in any new political conſtitutions, I am at no loſs to decide that the artificers are groſsly ignorant of their trade, or totally negligent of their duty. The ſimple governments are fundamentally defective,

to ſay no worſe of them. If you were to contemplate ſociety in but one point of view, all theſe ſimple modes of polity are infinitely captivating. In effect each would anſwer its ſingle end much more perfectly than the more complex is able to attain all its complex purpoſes. But it is better that the whole ſhould be imperfectly and anomalouſly anſwered, than that, while ſome parts are provided for with great exactneſs, others might be totally neglected, or perhaps materially injured, by the over-care of a favourite member.

The pretended rights of theſe theoriſts are all extremes; and in proportion as they are metaphyſically true, they are morally and politically falſe. The rights of men are in a ſort of *middle*, incapable of definition, but not impoſſible to be diſcerned. The rights of men in governments are their advantages; and theſe are often in balances between differences of good; in compromiſes ſometimes between good and evil, and ſometimes between evil and evil. Political reaſon is a computing principle; adding, ſubtracting, multiplying, and dividing, morally and not metaphyſically or mathematically, true moral denominations.

By theſe theoriſts the right of the people is almoſt always ſophiſtically confounded with their power. The body of the community, whenever it can come to act, can meet with no effectual reſiſtance; but till power and right are the ſame,

the

the whole body of them has no right inconſiſtent with virtue, and the firſt of all virtues, prudence. Men have no right to what is not reaſonable, and to what is not for their benefit; for though a pleaſant writer ſaid, *Liceat perire poetis*, when one of them, in cold blood, is ſaid to have leaped into the flames of a volcanick revolution, *Ardentem frigidus Ætnam inſiluit*, I conſider ſuch a frolick rather as an unjuſtifiable poetick licence, than as one of the franchiſes of Parnaſſus; and whether he were poet or divine, or politician, that choſe to exerciſe this kind of right, I think that more wiſe, becauſe more charitable thoughts would urge me rather to ſave the man, than to preſerve his brazen ſlippers as the monuments of his folly.

The kind of anniverſary ſermons to which a great part of what I write refers, if men are not ſhamed out of their preſent courſe, in commemorating the fact, will cheat many out of the principles, and deprive them of the benefits of the revolution they commemorate. I confeſs to you, Sir, I never liked this continual talk of reſiſtance, and revolution, or the practice of making the extreme medicine of the conſtitution its daily bread. It renders the habit of ſociety dangerouſly valetudinary: it is taking periodical doſes of mercury ſublimate, and ſwallowing down repeated provocatives of cantharides to our love of liberty.

This diſtemper of remedy, grown habitual, relaxes

laxes and wears out, by a vulgar and proſtituted uſe, the ſpring of that ſpirit which is to be exerted on great occaſions. It was in the moſt patient period of Roman ſervitude that themes of tyrannicide made the ordinary exerciſe of boys at ſchool—*cum perimit ſævos claſſis numeroſa tyrannos.* In the ordinary ſtate of things, it produces in a country like ours the worſt effects, even on the cauſe of that liberty which it abuſes with the diſſoluteneſs of an extravagant ſpeculation. Almoſt all the high-bred republicans of my time have, after a ſhort ſpace, become the moſt decided, thorough-paced courtiers; they ſoon left the buſineſs of a tedious, moderate, but practical reſiſtance, to thoſe of us whom, in the pride and intoxication of their theories, they have ſlighted as not much better than tories. Hypocriſy, of courſe, delights in the moſt ſublime ſpeculations; for, never intending to go beyond ſpeculation, it coſts nothing to have it magnificent. But even in caſes where rather levity than fraud was to be ſuſpected in theſe ranting ſpeculations, the iſſue has been much the ſame. Theſe profeſſors, finding their extreme principles not applicable to caſes which call only for a qualified, or, as I may ſay, civil, and legal reſiſtance, in ſuch caſes employ no reſiſtance at all. It is with them a war or a revolution, or it is nothing. Finding their ſchemes of politicks not adapted to the ſtate of the world in which they live, they often come

come to think lightly of all publick principle; and are ready, on their part, to abandon for a very trivial intereſt what they find of very trivial value. Some indeed are of more ſteady and perſevering natures; but theſe are eager politicans out of parliament, who have little to tempt them to abandon their favourite projects. They have ſome change in the church or ſtate, or both, conſtantly in their view. When that is the caſe, they are always bad citizens, and perfectly unſure connections. For, conſidering their ſpeculative deſigns as of infinite value, and the actual arrangement of the ſtate as of no eſtimation, they are at beſt indifferent about it. They ſee no merit in the good, and no fault in the vicious management of publick affairs; they rather rejoice in the latter, as more propitious to revolution. They ſee no merit or demerit in any man, or any action, or any political principle, any further than as they may forward or retard their deſign of change: they therefore take up, one day, the moſt violent and ſtretched prerogative, and another time the wildeſt democratick ideas of freedom, and paſs from the one to the other without any ſort of regard to cauſe, to perſon, or to party.

In France you are now in the criſis of a revolution, and in the tranſit from one form of government to another—you cannot ſee that character of men exactly in the ſame ſituation in which we

ſee it in this country. With us it is militant; with you it is triumphant; and you know how it can act when its power is commenſurate to its will. I would not be ſuppoſed to confine thoſe obſervations to any deſcription of men, or to comprehend all men of any deſcription within them —No! far from it. I am as incapable of that injuſtice, as I am of keeping terms with thoſe who profeſs principles of extremes; and who, under the name of religion, teach little elſe than wild and dangerous politicks. The worſt of theſe politicks of revolution is this: they temper and harden the breaſt, in order to prepare it for the deſperate ſtrokes which are ſometimes uſed in extreme occaſions. But as theſe occaſions may never arrive, the mind receives a gratuitous taint; and the moral ſentiments ſuffer not a little, when no political purpoſe is ſerved by the depravation. This ſort of people are ſo taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgot his nature. Without opening one new avenue to the underſtanding, they have ſucceeded in ſtopping up thoſe that lead to the heart. They have perverted in themſelves, and in thoſe that attend to them, all the well-placed ſympathies of the human breaſt.

This famous ſermon of the Old Jewry breathes nothing but this ſpirit through all the political part. Plots, maſſacres, aſſaſſinations, ſeem to ſome people

people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodleſs reformation, a guiltleſs liberty, appear flat and vapid to their taſte. There muſt be a great change of ſcene; there muſt be a magnificent ſtage effect; there muſt be a grand ſpectacle to rouſe the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of ſixty years ſecurity, and the ſtill unanimating repoſe of publick proſperity. The preacher found them all in the French revolution. This inſpires a juvenile warmth through his whole frame. His enthuſiaſm kindles as he advances; and when he arrives at his peroration, it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the Piſgah of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flouriſhing, and glorious ſtate of France, as in a bird-eye landſcape of a promiſed land, he breaks out into the following rapture:

"What an eventful period is this! I am *thank-*
"*ful* that I have lived to it; I could almoſt ſay,
"*Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace,*
"*for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* I have lived
"to ſee a *diffuſion* of knowledge, which has under-
"mined ſuperſtition and errour.—I have lived to
"ſee *the rights of men* better underſtood than ever;
"and nations panting for liberty which ſeemed
"to have loſt the idea of it.—I have lived to ſee
"*thirty millions of people*, indignant and reſolute,
"ſpurning at ſlavery, and demanding liberty with
"an irreſiſtible voice. *Their king led in triumph,*

"*and an arbitrary monarch ſurrendering himſelf* "*to his ſubjects**."

Before I proceed further, I have to remark, that Dr. Price ſeems rather to overvalue the great acquiſitions of light which he has obtained and diffuſed in this age. The laſt century appears to me to have been quite as much enlightened. It had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr. Price; and ſome of the great preachers of that period partook of it as eagerly as he has done in the triumph of France. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters for high treaſon, it was depoſed, that when king Charles was brought to London for his trial, the Apoſtle of Liberty in that day conducted the *triumph*. "I ſaw," ſays the witneſs, "his majeſty in the coach with ſix "horſes, and Peters riding before the king *tri*-"*umphing*." Dr. Price, when he talks as if he had made a diſcovery, only follows a precedent; for, after the commencement of the king's trial, this precurſor, the ſame Dr. Peters, concluding a long

* Another of theſe reverend gentlemen, who was witneſs to ſome of the ſpectacles which Paris has lately exhibited, expreſſes himſelf thus:—"*A king dragged in ſubmiſſive triumph* "*by his conquering ſubjects* is one of thoſe appearances of "grandeur which ſeldom riſe in the proſpect of human affairs, "and which, during the remainder of my life, I ſhall think of "with wonder and gratification." Theſe gentlemen agree marvellouſly in their feelings.

prayer at the royal chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly chofen his place) faid, "I have "prayed and preached thefe twenty years; and "now I may fay with old Simeon, *Lord, now letteft* "*thou thy fervant depart in peace, for mine eyes* "*have feen thy falvation* *." Peters had not the fruits of his prayer; for he neither departed fo foon as he wifhed, nor in peace. He became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himfelf a facrifice to the triumph which he led as pontiff. They dealt at the reftoration, perhaps, too hardly with this poor good man. But we owe it to his memory and his fufferings, that he had as much illumination, and as much zeal, and had as effectually undermined all *the fuperftition and errour* which might impede the great bufinefs he was engaged in, as any who follow and repeat after him, in this age, which would affume to itfelf an exclufive title to the knowledge of the rights of men, and all the glorious conlequences of that knowledge.

After this fally of the preacher of the Old Jewry, which differs only in place and time, but agrees perfectly with the fpirit and letter of the rapture of 1648, the revolution fociety, the fabricators of governments, the heroick band of *caffiierers*, of *monarchs*, electors of fovereigns, and leaders of kings

* State Trials, vol. ii. p. 360, 363.

in triumph, ſtrutting with a proud conſciouſneſs of the diffuſion of knowledge, of which every member had obtained ſo large a ſhare in the donative, were in haſte to make a generous diffuſion of the knowledge they had thus gratuitouſly received. To make this bountiful communication, they adjourned from the church in the Old Jewry, to the London Tavern; where the ſame Dr. Price, in whom the fumes of his oracular tripod were not entirely evaporated, moved and carried the reſolution, or addreſs of congratulation, tranſmitted by lord Stanhope to the national aſſembly of France.

I find a preacher of the goſpel profaning the beautiful and prophetick ejaculation, commonly called "*nunc dimittis*," made on the firſt preſentation of our Saviour in the temple, and applying it, with an inhuman and unnatural rapture, to the moſt horrid, atrocious, and afflicting ſpectacle that perhaps ever was exhibited to the pity and indignation of mankind. This "*leading in triumph*," a thing in its beſt form unmanly and irreligious, which fills our preacher with ſuch unhallowed tranſports, muſt ſhock, I believe, the moral taſte of every well-born mind. Several Engliſh were the ſtupified and indignant ſpectators of that triumph. It was (unleſs we have been ſtrangely deceived) a ſpectacle more reſembling a proceſſion of American ſavages, entering into Onondaga, after ſome of their murders called victories, and leading

leading into hovels hung round with ſcalps, their captives, overpowered with the ſcoffs and buffets of women as ferocious as themſelves, much more than it reſembled the triumphal pomp of a civilized martial nation;—if a civilized nation, or any men who had a ſenſe of generoſity, were capable of a perſonal triumph over the fallen and afflicted.

This, my dear Sir, was not the triumph of France. I muſt believe that, as a nation, it overwhelmed you with ſhame and horrour. I muſt believe that the national aſſembly find themſelves in a ſtate of the greateſt humiliation in not being able to puniſh the authors of this triumph, or the actors in it; and that they are in a ſituation in which any inquiry they may make upon the ſubject, muſt be deſtitute even of the appearance of liberty or impartiality. The apology of that aſſembly is found in their ſituation; but when we approve what they *muſt* bear, it is in us the degenerate choice of a vitiated mind.

With a compelled appearance of deliberation, they vote under the dominion of a ſtern neceſſity. They ſit in the heart, as it were, of a foreign republick: they have their reſidence in a city whoſe conſtitution has emanated neither from the charter of their king, nor from their legiſlative power. There they are ſurrounded by an army not raiſed either by the authority of their crown, or by their command; and which, if they ſhould order to

diſſolve itſelf, would inſtantly diſſolve them. There they ſit, after a gang of aſſaſſins had driven away ſome hundreds of the members; whilſt thoſe who held the ſame moderate principles, with more patience or better hope, continued every day expoſed to outrageous inſults and murderous threats. There a majority, ſometimes real, ſometimes pretended, captive itſelf, compels a captive king to iſſue as royal edicts, at third hand, the polluted nonſenſe of their moſt licentious and giddy coffee-houſes. It is notorious, that all their meaſures are decided before they are debated. It is beyond doubt, that under the terrour of the bayonet, and the lamp-poſt, and the torch to their houſes, they are obliged to adopt all the crude and deſperate meaſures ſuggeſted by clubs compoſed of a monſtrous medley of all conditions, tongues, and nations. Among theſe are found perſons, in compariſon of whom Catiline would be thought ſcrupulous, and Cethegus a man of ſobriety and moderation. Nor is it in theſe clubs alone that the publick meaſures are deformed into monſters. They undergo a previous diſtortion in academies, intended as ſo many ſeminaries for theſe clubs, which are ſet up in all the places of publick reſort. In theſe meetings of all ſorts, every counſel, in proportion as it is daring, and violent, and perfidious, is taken for the mark of ſuperiour genius. Humanity and compaſſion are ridiculed as

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the fruits of ſuperſtition and ignorance. Tenderneſs to individuals is conſidered as treaſon to the publick. Liberty is always to be eſtimated perfect as property is rendered inſecure. Amidſt aſſaſſination, maſſacre, and confiſcation, perpetrated or meditated, they are forming plans for the good order of future ſociety. Embracing in their arms the carcaſes of baſe criminals, and promoting their relations on the title of their offences, they drive hundreds of virtuous perſons to the ſame end, by forcing them to ſubſiſt by beggary or by crime.

The aſſembly, their organ, acts before them the farce of deliberation with as little decency as liberty. They act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience; they act amidſt the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women loſt to ſhame, who, according to their inſolent fancies, direct, control, applaud, explode them; and ſometimes mix and take their ſeats amongſt them; domineering over them with a ſtrange mixture of ſervile petulance and proud preſumptuous authority. As they have inverted order in all things, the gallery is in the place of the houſe. This aſſembly, which overthrows kings and kingdoms, has not even the phyſiognomy and aſpect of a grave legiſlative body—*nec color imperii, nec frons erat ulla ſenatus.* They have a power given to them, like that of the evil principle, to ſubvert

ſubvert and deſtroy; but none to conſtruct, except ſuch machines as may be fitted for further ſubverſion and further deſtruction.

Who is it that admires, and from the heart is attached to national repreſentative aſſemblies, but muſt turn with horrour and diſguſt from ſuch a profane burleſque, and abominable perverſion of that ſacred inſtitute? Lovers of monarchy, lovers of republicks, muſt alike abhor it. The members of your aſſembly muſt themſelves groan under the tyranny of which they have all the ſhame, none of the direction, and little of the profit. I am ſure many of the members who compoſe even the majority of that body muſt feel as I do, notwithſtanding the applauſes of the revolution ſociety. Miſerable king! miſerable aſſembly! How muſt that aſſembly be ſilently ſcandalized with thoſe of their members, who could call a day which ſeemed to blot the ſun out of heaven, "*un beau jour* *!" How muſt they be inwardly indignant at hearing others, who thought fit to declare to them, "that "the veſſel of the ſtate would fly forward in her "courſe towards regeneration with more ſpeed "than ever," from the ſtiff gale of treaſon and murder, which preceded our preacher's triumph! What muſt they have felt, whilſt, with outward patience and inward indignation, they heard of

* 6th of October, 1789.

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the ſlaughter of innocent gentlemen in their houſes, that " the blood ſpilled was not the moſt pure?" What muſt they have felt, when they were beſieged by complaints of diſorders which ſhook their country to its foundations, at being compelled coolly to tell the complainants, that they were under the protection of the law, and that they would addreſs the king (the captive king) to cauſe the laws to be enforced for their protection; when the enſlaved miniſters of that captive king had formally notified to them, that there were neither law, nor authority, nor power left to protect? What muſt they have felt at being obliged, as a felicitation on the preſent new year, to requeſt their captive king to forget the ſtormy period of the laſt, on account of the great good which *he* was likely to produce to his people; to the complete attainment of which good they adjourned the practical demonſtrations of their loyalty, aſſuring him of their obedience, when he ſhould no longer poſſeſs any authority to command?

This addreſs was made with much good-nature and affection, to be ſure. But among the revolutions in France muſt be reckoned a conſiderable revolution in their ideas of politeneſs. In England we are ſaid to learn manners at ſecond-hand from your ſide of the water, and that we dreſs our behaviour in the frippery of France. If ſo, we

we are ſtill in the old cut; and have not ſo far conformed to the new Pariſian mode of good-breeding, as to think it quite in the moſt refined ſtrain of delicate compliment (whether in condolence or congratulation) to ſay, to the moſt humiliated creature that crawls upon the earth, that great publick benefits are derived from the murder of his ſervants, the attempted aſſaſſination of himſelf and of his wife, and the mortification, diſgrace, and degradation, that he has perſonally ſuffered. It is a topick of conſolation which our ordinary of Newgate would be too humane to uſe to a criminal at the foot of the gallows. I ſhould have thought that the hangman of Paris, now that he is liberalized by the vote of the national aſſembly, and is allowed his rank and arms in the herald's college of the rights of men, would be too generous, too gallant a man, too full of the ſenſe of his new dignity, to employ that cutting conſolation to any of the perſons whom the *leze nation* might bring under the adminiſtration of his *executive powers*.

A man is fallen indeed, when he is thus flattered. The anodyne draught of oblivion, thus drugged, is well calculated to preſerve a galling wakefulneſs, and to feed the living ulcer of a corroding memory. Thus to adminiſter the opiate potion of amneſty, powdered with all the ingredients of ſcorn and contempt, is to hold to his lips, inſtead of "the balm of hurt minds," the cup of human

miſery

miſery full to the brim, and to force him to drink it to the dregs.

Yielding to reaſons, at leaſt as forcible as thoſe which were ſo delicately urged in the compliment on the new year, the king of France will probably endeavour to forget theſe events and that compliment. But Hiſtory, who keeps a durable record of all our acts, and exerciſes her awful cenſure over the proceedings of all ſorts of ſovereigns, will not forget either thoſe events, or the æra of this liberal refinement in the intercourſe of mankind. Hiſtory will record, that on the morning of the 6th of October, 1789, the king and queen of France, after a day of confuſion, alarm, diſmay, and ſlaughter, lay down, under the pledged ſecurity of publick faith, to indulge nature in a few hours of reſpite, and troubled melancholy repoſe. From this ſleep the queen was firſt ſtartled by the voice of the centinel at her door, who cried out to her, to ſave herſelf by flight—that this was the laſt proof of fidelity he could give—that they were upon him, and he was dead. Inſtantly he was cut down. A band of cruel ruffians and aſſaſſins, reeking with his blood, ruſhed into the chamber of the queen, and pierced with a hundred ſtrokes of bayonets and poniards the bed, from whence this perſecuted woman had but juſt time to fly almoſt naked, and through ways unknown to the murderers had

eſcaped

eſcaped to ſeek refuge at the feet of a king and huſband, not ſecure of his own life for a moment.

This king, to ſay no more of him, and this queen, and their infant children (who once would have been the pride and hope of a great and generous people) were then forced to abandon the ſanctuary of the moſt ſplendid palace in the world, which they left ſwimming in blood, polluted by maſſacre, and ſtrewed with ſcattered limbs and mutilated carcaſes. Thence they were conducted into the capital of their kingdom. Two had been ſelected from the unprovoked, unreſiſted, promiſcuous ſlaughter, which was made of the gentlemen of birth and family who compoſed the king's body guard. Theſe two gentlemen, with all the parade of an execution of juſtice, were cruelly and publickly dragged to the block, and beheaded in the great court of the palace. Their heads were ſtuck upon ſpears, and led the proceſſion; whilſt the royal captives who followed in the train were ſlowly moved along, amidſt the horrid yells, and ſhrilling ſcreams, and frantick dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abuſed ſhape of the vileſt of women. After they had been made to taſte, drop by drop, more than the bitterneſs of death, in the ſlow torture of a journey of twelve miles, protracted to ſix hours, they were, under a guard,

guard, compoſed of thoſe very ſoldiers who had thus conducted them through this famous triumph, lodged in one of the old palaces of Paris, now converted into a Baſtile for kings.

Is this a triumph to be conſecrated at altars? to be commemorated with grateful thankſgiving? to be offered to the divine humanity with fervent prayer and enthuſiaſtick ejaculation?—Theſe Theban and Thracian orgies, acted in France, and applauded only in the Old Jewry, I aſſure you, kindle prophetick enthuſiaſm in the minds but of very few people in this kingdom; although a ſaint and apoſtle, who may have revelations of his own, and who has ſo completely vanquiſhed all the mean ſuperſtitions of the heart, may incline to think it pious and decorous to compare it with the entrance into the world of the Prince of Peace, proclaimed in an holy temple by a venerable ſage, and not long before not worſe announced by the voice of angels to the quiet innocence of ſhepherds.

At firſt I was at a loſs to account for this fit of unguarded tranſport. I knew, indeed, that the ſufferings of monarchs make a delicious repaſt to ſome ſort of palates. There were reflections which might ſerve to keep this appetite within ſome bounds of temperance. But when I took one circumſtance into my conſideration, I was obliged to confeſs, that much allowance ought to be made for

for the ſociety, and that the temptation was too ſtrong for common diſcretion; I mean, the circumſtance of the Io Pæan of the triumph, the animating cry which called "for *all* the BISHOPS "to be hanged on the lamp-poſts*," might well have brought forth a burſt of enthuſiaſm on the foreſeen conſequences of this happy day. I allow to ſo much enthuſiaſm ſome little deviation from prudence. I allow this prophet to break forth into hymns of joy and thankſgiving on an event which appears like the precurſor of the Millennium, and the projected fifth monarchy, in the deſtruction of all church eſtabliſhments. There was, however, (as in all human affairs there is) in the midſt of this joy ſomething to exerciſe the patience of theſe worthy gentlemen, and to try the long-ſuffering of their faith. The actual murder of the king and queen, and their child, was wanting to the other auſpicious circumſtances of this "*beautiful day.*" The actual murder of the biſhops, though called for by ſo many holy ejaculations, was alſo wanting. A group of regicide and ſacrilegious ſlaughter, was indeed boldly ſketched, but it was only ſketched. It unhappily was left unfiniſhed, in this great hiſtory-piece of the maſſacre of innocents. What hardy pencil of a great maſter, from the ſchool of the rights of men, will

* Tous les Evêques à la lanterne.

finiſh

finiſh it, is to be ſeen hereafter. The age has not yet the complete benefit of that diffuſion of knowledge that has undermined ſuperſtition and errour; and the king of France wants another object or two, to conſign to oblivion, in conſideration of all the good which is to ariſe from his own ſufferings, and the patriotick crimes of an enlightened age *.

Although

* It is proper here to refer to a letter written upon this ſubject by an eye-witneſs. That eye-witneſs was one of the moſt honeſt, intelligent, and eloquent members of the national aſſembly, one of the moſt active and zealous reformers of the ſtate. He was obliged to ſecede from the aſſembly; and he afterwards became a voluntary exile, on account of the horrours of this pious triumph, and the diſpoſitions of men, who, profiting of crimes, if not cauſing them, have taken the lead in publick affairs.

Extract of M. de Lally Tollendal's Second Letter to a Friend.

" Parlons du parti que j'ai pris; il eſt bien juſtifié dans ma conſcience.—Ni cette ville coupable, ni cette aſſemblée plus coupable encore, ne meritoient que je me juſtifie; mais j'ai à cœur que vous, et les perſonnes qui penſent comme vous, ne me condamnent pas.—Ma ſanté, je vous jure, me rendoit mes fonctions impoſſibles; mais même en les mettant de côté il a été au-deſſus de mes forces de ſupporter plus longtems l'horreur que me cauſoit ce ſang,—ces têtes—cette reine *preſque égorgée*, ce roi,—amené *eſclave*,—entrant à Paris, au milieu de ſes aſſaſſins, et précédé des têtes de ſes malheureux, gardes—ces perfides janniſſaires, ces aſſaſſins, ces femmes cannibales, ce cri de TOUS LES EVEQUES A LA LANTERNE, dans le moment ou le roi entre

Although this work of our new light and knowledge did not go to the length that in all probability it was intended it ſhould be carried; yet I muſt

ſa capitale avec deux évêques de ſon conſeil dans ſa voiture—un *coup de fuſil*, que j'ai vu tirer dans un *des caroſſes de la reine*—M. Bailly appellant cela *un beau jour*—l'aſſemblée ayant déclaré froidement le matin, qu'il n'étoit pas de ſa dignité d'aller toute entiere environner le roi—M. Mirabeau diſant impunément dans cette aſſemblée que le vaiſſeau de l'état, loin d'être arrêté dans ſa courſe, s'élanceroit avec plus de rapidité que jamais vers ſa régénération—M. Barnave, riant avec lui, quand des flots de ſang couloient autour de nous—le vertueux Mounier* échappant par miracle à vingt aſſaſſins, qui avoient voulu faire de ſa tête un trophée de plus: Voilà ce qui me fit jurer de ne plus mettre le pied *dans cette caverne d'Antropophages* [the national aſſembly] où je n'avois plus de force d'élever la voix, ou depuis ſix ſemaines je l'avois élevée en vain.

" Moi, Mounier, et tous les honnêtes gens, ont penſé que le dernier effort à faire pour le bien étoit d'en ſortir. Aucune idée de crainte ne s'eſt approchée de moi. Je rougirois de m'en défendre. J'avois encore reçû ſur la route de la part de ce peuple, moins coupable que ceux qui l'ont enivré de fureur, des acclamations, et des applaudiſſements, dont d'autres auroient été flattés, et qui m'ont fait frémir. C'eſt à l'indignation, c'eſt à l'horreur, c'eſt aux convulſions phyſiques, que le ſeul aſpect du ſang me fait éprouver que j'ai cédé. On brave un ſeule mort; on la brave pluſieurs fois, quand elle peut être utile. Mais aucune puiſſance ſous le ciel, mais aucune opinion publique ou privée n'ont le droit de me condamner à ſouffrir inutilement mille ſupplices par minute, et à perir de déſeſpoir, de rage,

* N. B. Mr. Mounier was then ſpeaker of the national aſſembly. He has ſince been obliged to live in exile, though one of the firmeſt aſſertors of liberty.

au

muſt think that ſuch treatment of any human creatures muſt be ſhocking to any but thoſe who are made for accompliſhing revolutions. But I cannot ſtop here. Influenced by the inborn feelings of my nature, and not being illuminated by a ſingle ray of this new-ſprung modern light, I confeſs to you, Sir, that the exalted rank of the perſons ſuffering, and particularly the ſex, the beauty, and the amiable qualities of the deſcendant of ſo many kings and emperours, with the tender age of royal infants, inſenſible only through infancy and innocence of the cruel outrages to which their parents were expoſed, inſtead of being a ſubject of exultation, adds not a little to my ſenſibility on that moſt melancholy occaſion.

I hear that the auguſt perſon, who was the principal object of our preacher's triumph, though he ſupported himſelf, felt much on that ſhameful occaſion. As a man, it became him to feel for his

au milieu des *triomphes*, du crime que je n'ai pu arrêter. Ils me proſcriront, ils confiſqueront mes biens. Je labourerai la terre, et je ne les verrai plus. Voilà ma juſtification. Vous pourrez la lire, la montrer, la laiſſer copier; tant pis pour ceux qui ne la comprendront pas; ce ne ſera alors moi qui auroit eu tort de la leur donner."

This military man had not ſo good nerves as the peaceable gentleman of the Old Jewry.—See Monſ. Mounier's narrative of theſe tranſactions; a man alſo of honour and virtue, and talents, and therefore a fugitive.

wife and his children, and the faithful guards of his perſon, that were maſſacred in cold blood about him; as a prince it became him to feel for the ſtrange and frightful transformation of his civilized ſubjects, and to be more grieved for them, than ſolicitous for himſelf. It derogates little from his fortitude, while it adds infinitely to the honour of his humanity. I am very ſorry to ſay it, very ſorry indeed, that ſuch perſonages are in a ſituation in which it is not becoming in us to praiſe the virtues of the great.

I hear, and I rejoice to hear, that the great lady, the other object of the triumph, has borne that day (one is intereſted that beings made for ſuffering ſhould ſuffer well) and that ſhe bears all the ſucceeding days, that ſhe bears the impriſonment of her huſband, and her own captivity, and the exile of her friends, and the inſulting adulation of addreſſes, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with a ſerene patience, in a manner ſuited to her rank and race, and becoming the offſpring of a ſovereign diſtinguiſhed for her piety and her courage; that, like her, ſhe has loſty ſentiments; that ſhe feels with the dignity of a Roman matron; that in the laſt extremity ſhe will ſave herſelf from the laſt diſgrace; and that, if ſhe muſt fall, ſhe will fall by no ignoble hand.

It is now ſixteen or ſeventeen years ſince I ſaw the

the queen of France, then the dauphineſs, at Verſailles; and ſurely never lighted on this orb, which ſhe hardly ſeemed to touch, a more delightful viſion. I ſaw her juſt above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated ſphere ſhe juſt began to move in,—glittering like the morning-ſtar, full of life, and ſplendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart muſt I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when ſhe added titles of veneration to thoſe of enthuſiaſtick, diſtant, reſpectful love, that ſhe ſhould ever be obliged to carry the ſharp antidote againſt diſgrace concealed in that boſom; little did I dream that I ſhould have lived to ſee ſuch diſaſters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thouſand ſwords muſt have leaped from their ſcabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with inſult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of ſophiſters, œconomiſts, and calculators, has ſucceeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguiſhed for ever. Never, never more, ſhall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and ſex, that proud ſubmiſſion, that dignified obedience, that ſubordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in ſervitude itſelf, the ſpirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurſe

of manly ſentiment and heroick enterpriſe is gone! It is gone, that ſenſibility of principle, that chaſtity of honour, which felt a ſtain like a wound, which inſpired courage whilſt it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itſelf loſt half its evil, by loſing all its groſſneſs.

This mixed ſyſtem of opinion and ſentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying ſtate of human affairs, ſubſiſted and influenced through a long ſucceſſion of generations, even to the time we live in. If it ſhould ever be totally extinguiſhed, the loſs I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has diſtinguiſhed it under all its forms of government, and diſtinguiſhed it to its advantage, from the ſtates of Aſia, and poſſibly from thoſe ſtates which flouriſhed in the moſt brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of ſocial life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raiſed private men to be fellows with kings. Without force, or oppoſition, it ſubdued the fierceneſs of pride and power; it obliged ſovereigns to ſubmit to the ſoft collar of ſocial eſteem, compelled ſtern authority

authority to ſubmit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquiſher of laws, to be ſubdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleaſing illuſions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different ſhades of life, and which, by a bland aſſimilation, incorporated into politicks the ſentiments which beautify and ſoften private ſociety, are to be diſſolved by this new conquering empire of light and reaſon. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the ſuperadded ideas, furniſhed from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the underſtanding ratifies, as neceſſary to cover the defects of our naked ſhivering nature, and to raiſe it to dignity in our own eſtimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, abſurd, and antiquated faſhion.

On this ſcheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the higheſt order. All homage paid to the ſex in general as ſuch, and without diſtinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and ſacrilege, are but fictions of ſuperſtition, corrupting juriſprudence by deſtroying its ſimplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a biſhop, or a father, are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way gainers

by it, a ſort of homicide much the moſt pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too ſevere a ſcrutiny.

On the ſcheme of this barbarous philoſophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy underſtandings, and which is as void of ſolid wiſdom, as it is deſtitute of all taſte and elegance, laws are to be ſupported only by their own terrours, and by the concern, which each individual may find in them, from his own private ſpeculations, or can ſpare to them from his own private intereſts. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every viſto, you ſee nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanick philoſophy, our inſtitutions can never be embodied, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in perſons; ſo as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that ſort of reaſon which baniſhes the affections is incapable of filling their place. Theſe publick affections, combined with manners, are required ſometimes as ſupplements, ſometimes as correctives, always as aids to law. The precept given by a wiſe man, as well as a great critick, for the conſtruction of poems, is equally true as to ſtates:—*Non ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe poemata, dulcia ſunto.* There ought to be a ſyſtem of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be diſpoſed to reliſh. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

But

But power, of ſome kind or other, will ſurvive the ſhock in which manners and opinions periſh; and it will find other and worſe means for its ſupport. The uſurpation which, in order to ſubvert ancient inſtitutions, has deſtroyed ancient principles, will hold power by arts ſimilar to thoſe by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous ſpirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and ſubjects from the precaution of tyranny, ſhall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and aſſaſſinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiſcation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power, not ſtanding on its own honour, and the honour of thoſe who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy when ſubjects are rebels from principle.

When ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loſs cannot poſſibly be eſtimated. From that moment we have no compaſs to govern us; nor can we know diſtinctly to what port we ſteer. Europe, undoubtedly, taken in a maſs, was in a flouriſhing condition the day on which your revolution was completed. How much of that proſperous ſtate was owing to the ſpirit of our old manners and opinions is not eaſy to ſay; but as ſuch cauſes cannot be indifferent in their operation, we muſt preſume, that, on the whole, their operation was beneficial.

We

We are but too apt to conſider things in the ſtate in which we find them, without ſufficiently adverting to the cauſes by which they have been produced, and poſſibly may be upheld. Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the reſult of both combined; I mean the ſpirit of a gentleman, and the ſpirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profeſſion, the other by patronage, kept learning in exiſtence, even in the midſt of arms and confuſions, and whilſt governments were rather in their cauſes than formed. Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to prieſthood; and paid it with uſury, by enlarging their ideas, and by furniſhing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indiſſoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been ſatisfied to continue the inſtructor, and not aſpired to be the maſter! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be caſt into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a ſwiniſh multitude *.

* See the fate of Bailly and Condorcet, ſuppoſed to be here particularly alluded to. Compare the circumſtances of the trial, and execution of the former with this prediction.

If

If, as I ſuſpect, modern letters owe more than they are always willing to own ſo ancient manners, ſo do other intereſts which we value full as much as they are worth. Even commerce, and trade, and manufacture, the gods of our œconomical politicians, are themſelves perhaps but creatures; are themſelves but effects, which, as firſt cauſes, we chooſe to worſhip. They certainly grew under the ſame ſhade in which learning flouriſhed. They too may decay with their natural protecting principles. With you, for the preſent at leaſt, they all threaten to diſappear together. Where trade and manufactures are wanting to a people, and the ſpirit of nobility and religion remains, ſentiment ſupplies, and not always ill ſupplies their place; but if commerce and the arts ſhould be loſt in an experiment to try how well a ſtate may ſtand without theſe old fundamental principles, what ſort of a thing muſt be a nation of groſs, ſtupid, ferocious, and at the ſame time, poor and ſordid barbarians, deſtitute of religion, honour, or manly pride, poſſeſſing nothing at preſent, and hoping for nothing hereafter?

I wiſh you may not be going faſt, and by the ſhorteſt cut, to that horrible and diſguſtful ſituation. Already there appears a poverty of conception, a coarſeneſs and vulgarity in all the proceedings of the aſſembly and of all their inſtructors. Their

Their liberty is not liberal. Their ſcience is preſumptuous ignorance. Their humanity is ſavage and brutal.

It is not clear, whether in England we learned thoſe grand and decorous principles, and manners, of which conſiderable traces yet remain, from you, or whether you took them from us. But to you, I think, we trace them beſt. You ſeem to me to be—*gentis incunabula noſtræ.* France has always more or leſs influenced manners in England; and when your fountain is choaked up and polluted, the ſtream will not run long, or not run clear with us, or perhaps with any nation. This gives all Europe, in my opinion, but too cloſe and connected a concern in what is done in France. Excuſe me, therefore, if I have dwelt too long on the atrocious ſpectacle of the ſixth of October, 1789, or have given too much ſcope to the reflections which have ariſen in my mind on occaſion of the moſt important of all revolutions, which may be dated from that day, I mean a revolution in ſentiments, manners, and moral opinions. As things now ſtand, with every thing reſpectable deſtroyed without us, and an attempt to deſtroy within us every principle of reſpect, one is almoſt forced to apologize for harbouring the common feelings of men.

Why do I feel ſo differently from the Reverend Dr.

Dr. Price, and thoſe of his lay flock, who will chooſe to adopt the ſentiments of his diſcourſe?—for this plain reaſon—becauſe it is *natural* I ſhould; becauſe we are ſo made as to be affected at ſuch ſpectacles with melancholy ſentiments upon the unſtable condition of mortal proſperity, and the tremendous uncertainty of human greatneſs; becauſe in thoſe natural feelings we learn great leſſons; becauſe in events like theſe our paſſions inſtruct our reaſon; becauſe when kings are hurled from their thrones by the Supreme Director of this great drama, and become the objects of inſult to the baſe, and of pity to the good, we behold ſuch diſaſters in the moral, as we ſhould behold a miracle in the phyſical order of things. We are alarmed into reflection; our minds (as it has long ſince been obſerved) are purified by terrour and pity; our weak unthinking pride is humbled, under the diſpenſations of a myſterious wiſdom. Some tears might be drawn from me, if ſuch a ſpectacle were exhibited on the ſtage. I ſhould be truly aſhamed of finding in myſelf that ſuperficial, theatrick ſenſe of painted diſtreſs, whilſt I could exult over it in real life. With ſuch a perverted mind, I could never venture to ſhew my face at a tragedy. People would think the tears that Garrick formerly, or that Siddons not long ſince, have extorted from me, were the tears of hypocriſy;

hypocriſy; I ſhould know them to be the tears of folly.

Indeed the theatre is a better ſchool of moral ſentiments than churches, where the feelings of humanity are thus outraged. Poets who have to deal with an audience not yet graduated in the ſchool of the rights of men, and who muſt apply themſelves to the moral conſtitution of the heart, would not dare to produce ſuch a triumph as a matter of exultation. There, where men follow their natural impulſes, they would not bear the odious maxims of a Machiavelian policy, whether applied to the attainment of monarchial or democratick tyranny. They would reject them on the modern, as they once did on the ancient ſtage, where they could not bear even the hypothetical propoſition of ſuch wickedneſs in the mouth of a perſonated tyrant, though ſuitable to the character he ſuſtained. No theatrick audience in Athens would bear what has been borne, in the midſt of the real tragedy of this triumphal day; a principal actor weighing, as it were in ſcales hung in a ſhop of horrours,—ſo much actual crime againſt ſo much contingent advantage,—and after putting in and out weights, declaring that the balance was on the ſide of the advantages. They would not bear to ſee the crimes of new democracy poſted as in a ledger againſt the crimes of old deſpotiſm,

and the book-keepers of politicks finding democracy ſtill in debt, but by no means unable or unwilling to pay the balance. In the theatre, the firſt intuitive glance, without any elaborate proceſs of reaſoning, would ſhew, that this method of political computation would juſtify every extent of crime. They would ſee, that on theſe principles, even where the very worſt acts were not perpetrated, it was owing rather to the fortune of the conſpirators than to their parſimony in the expenditure of treachery and blood. They would ſoon ſee, that criminal means once tolerated are ſoon preferred. They preſent a ſhorter cut to the object than through the highway of the moral virtues. Juſtifying perfidy and murder for publick benefit, publick benefit would ſoon become the pretext, and perfidy and murder the end; until rapacity, malice, revenge, and fear more dreadful than revenge, could ſatiate their inſatiable appetites. Such muſt be the conſequences of loſing in the ſplendour of theſe triumphs of the rights of men, all natural ſenſe of wrong and right.

But the reverend paſtor exults in this "leading "in triumph," becauſe truly Louis the Sixteenth was "an arbitrary monarch;" that is, in other words, neither more nor leſs, than becauſe he was Louis the Sixteenth, and becauſe he had the miſfortune to be born king of France, with the prerogatives

gatives of which, a long line of anceſtors, and a long acquieſcence of the people, without any act of his, had put him in poſſeſſion. A misfortune it has indeed turned out to him, that he was born king of France. But misfortune is not crime, nor is indiſcretion always the greateſt guilt. I ſhall never think that a prince, the acts of whoſe whole reign were a ſeries of conceſſions to his ſubjects, who was willing to relax his authority, to remit his prerogatives, to call his people to a ſhare of freedom, not known, perhaps not deſired by their anceſtors; ſuch a prince, though he ſhould be ſubject to the common frailties attached to men and to princes, though he ſhould have once thought it neceſſary to provide force againſt the deſperate deſigns manifeſtly carrying on againſt his perſon, and the remnants of his authority; though all this ſhould be taken into conſideration, I ſhall be led with great difficulty to think he deſerves the cruel and inſulting triumph of Paris, and of Dr. Price. I tremble for the cauſe of liberty, from ſuch an example to kings. I tremble for the cauſe of humanity, in the unpuniſhed outrages of the moſt wicked of mankind. But there are ſome people of that low and degenerate faſhion of mind, that they look up with a ſort of complacent awe and admiration to kings, who know to keep firm in their ſeat, to hold a ſtrict hand over their ſubjects, to aſſert their prerogative, and by the awakened

kened vigilance of a ſevere deſpotiſm, to guard againſt the very firſt approaches of freedom. Againſt ſuch as theſe they never elevate their voice. Deſerters from principle, lifted with fortune, they never ſee any good in ſuffering virtue, nor any crime in proſperous uſurpation.

If it could have been made clear to me, that the king and queen of France (thoſe I mean who were ſuch before the triumph) were inexorable and cruel tyrants, that they had formed a deliberate ſcheme for maſſacring the national aſſembly (I think I have ſeen ſomething like the latter inſinuated in certain publications), I ſhould think their captivity juſt. If this be true, much more ought to have been done, but done, in my opinion, in another manner. The puniſhment of real tyrants is a noble and awful act of juſtice; and it has with truth been ſaid to be conſolatory to the human mind. But if I were to puniſh a wicked king, I ſhould regard the dignity in avenging the crime. Juſtice is grave and decorous, and in its puniſhments rather ſeems to ſubmit to a neceſſity, than to make a choice. Had Nero, or Agrippina, or Louis the Eleventh, or Charles the Ninth, been the ſubject; if Charles the Twelfth of Sweden after the murder of Patkul, or his predeceſſor Chriſtina, after the murder of Monaldeſchi, had fallen into your hands, Sir, or into mine, I am ſure our conduct would have been different.

If the French king, or king of the French, (or by whatever name he is known in the new vocabulary of your conſtitution) has in his own perſon, and that of his queen, really deſerved theſe unavowed but unavenged murderous attempts, and thoſe frequent indignities more cruel than murder, ſuch a perſon would ill deſerve even that ſubordinate executory truſt, which I underſtand is to be placed in him; nor is he fit to be called chief in a nation which he has outraged and oppreſſed. A worſe choice for ſuch an office in a new commonwealth, than that of a depoſed tyrant, could not poſſibly be made. But to degrade and inſult a man as the worſt of criminals, and afterwards to truſt him in your higheſt concerns, as a faithful, honeſt, and zealous ſervant, is not conſiſtent in reaſoning, nor prudent in policy, nor ſafe in practice. Thoſe who could make ſuch an appointment muſt be guilty of a more flagrant breach of truſt than any they have yet committed againſt the people. As this is the only crime in which your leading politicians could have acted inconſiſtently, I conclude that there is no ſort of ground for theſe horrid inſinuations. I think no better of all the other calumnies.

In England, we give no credit to them. We are generous enemies: we are faithful allies. We ſpurn from us with diſguſt and indignation the ſlanders of thoſe who bring us their anecdotes with

with the atteſtation of the flower-de-luce on their ſhoulder. We have Lord George Gordon faſt in Newgate; and neither his being a publick proſelyte to Judaiſm, nor his having, in his zeal againſt catholick prieſts and all ſorts of eccleſiaſticks, raiſed a mob (excuſe the term, it is ſtill in uſe here) which pulled down all our priſons, have preſerved to him a liberty of which he did not render himſelf worthy by a virtuous uſe of it. We have rebuilt Newgate, and tenanted the manſion. We have priſons almoſt as ſtrong as the Baſtile, for thoſe who dare to libel the queens of France. In this ſpiritual retreat, let the noble libeller remain. Let him there meditate on his Thalmud, until he learns a conduct more becoming his birth and parts, and not ſo diſgraceful to the ancient religion to which he has become a proſelyte; or until ſome perſons from your ſide of the water, to pleaſe your new Hebrew brethren, ſhall ranſom him. He may then be enabled to purchaſe, with the old hoards of the ſynagogue, and a very ſmall poundage, on the long compound intereſt of the thirty pieces of ſilver (Dr. Price has ſhewn us what miracles compound intereſt will perform in 1790 years) the lands which are lately diſcovered to have been uſurped by the Gallican church. Send us your popiſh archbiſhop of Paris, and we will ſend you our proteſtant Rabbin. We ſhall treat the perſon you ſend us in exchange like a gentle-

man and an honeſt man, as he is; but pray let him bring with him the fund of his hoſpitality, bounty, and charity; and, depend upon it, we ſhall never confiſcate a ſhilling of that honourable and pious fund, nor think of enriching the treaſury with the ſpoils of the poor-box.

To tell you the truth, my dear Sir, I think the honour of our nation to be ſomewhat concerned in the diſclaimer of the proceedings of this ſociety of the Old Jewry and the London Tavern. I have no man's proxy. I ſpeak only for myſelf; when I diſclaim, as I do with all poſſible earneſtneſs, all communion with the actors in that triumph, or with the admirers of it. When I aſſert any thing elſe, as concerning the people of England, I ſpeak from obſervation, not from authority; but I ſpeak from the experience I have had in a pretty extenſive and mixed communication with the inhabitants of this kingdom, of all deſcriptions and ranks, and after a courſe of attentive obſervation, begun in early life, and continued for near forty years. I have often been aſtoniſhed, conſidering that we are divided from you but by a ſlender dyke of about twenty-four miles, and that the mutual intercourſe between the two countries has lately been very great, to find how little you ſeem to know of us. I ſuſpect that this is owing to your forming a judgment of this nation from certain publications, which do, very erroneouſly, if they do

do at all, repreſent the opinions and diſpoſitions generally prevalent in England. The vanity, reſtleſſneſs, petulance, and ſpirit of intrigue of ſeveral petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of conſequence in buſtle and noiſe, and puffing, and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a general mark of acquieſcence in their opinions. No ſuch thing, I aſſure you. Becauſe half a dozen graſhoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilſt thouſands of great cattle, repoſed beneath the ſhadow of the Britiſh oak, chew the cud and are ſilent, pray do not imagine that thoſe who make the noiſe are the only inhabitants of the field; that of courſe, they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little ſhrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troubleſome inſects of the hour.

I almoſt venture to affirm, that not one in a hundred amongſt us participates in the "triumph" of the revolution ſociety. If the king and queen of France, and their children, were to fall into our hands by the chance of war, in the moſt acrimonious of all hoſtilities (I deprecate ſuch an event, I deprecate ſuch hoſtility) they would be treated with another ſort of triumphal entry into London. We formerly have had a king of France in that ſituation; you have read how he was treated by

the victor in the field; and in what manner he was afterwards received in England. Four hundred years have gone over us; but I believe we are not materially changed ſince that period. Thanks to our ſullen reſiſtance to innovation, thanks to the cold ſluggiſhneſs of our national character, we ſtill bear the ſtamp of our forefathers. We have not (as I conceive) loſt the generoſity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we ſubtilized ourſelves into ſavages. We are not the converts of Rouſſeau; we are not the diſciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progreſs amongſt us. Atheiſts are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no diſcoveries; and we think that no diſcoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were underſtood long before we were born, altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our preſumption, and the ſilent tomb ſhall have impoſed its law on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails; we ſtill feel within us, and we cheriſh and cultivate, thoſe inbred ſentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true ſupporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and truſſed, in order that we may

be

be filled, like ſtuffed birds in a muſeum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred ſhreds of paper about the rights of man. We preſerve the whole of our feelings ſtill native and intire, unſophiſticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of fleſh and blood beating in our boſoms. We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magiſtrates; with reverence to prieſts; and with reſpect to nobility*. Why? Becauſe when ſuch ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be ſo affected; becauſe all other feelings are falſe and ſpurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty; and by teaching us a ſervile, licentious, and abandoned inſolence, to be our low ſport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for, and juſtly deſerving of ſlavery, through the whole courſe of our lives.

* The Engliſh are, I conceive, miſrepreſented in a letter publiſhed in one of the papers by a gentleman thought to be a diſſenting miniſter.—When writing to Dr. Price of the ſpirit which prevails at Paris, he ſays, "The ſpirit of the people in "this place has aboliſhed all the proud *diſtinctions* which the "*king* and *nobles* had uſurped in their minds; whether they "talk of *the king, the noble, or the prieſt*, their whole language "is that of the moſt *enlightened and liberal amongſt the Engliſh.*" If this gentleman means to confine the terms *enlightened and liberal* to one ſet of men in England, it may be true. It is not generally ſo.

You ſee, Sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confeſs, that we are generally men of untaught feelings; that inſtead of caſting away all our old prejudices, we cheriſh them to a very conſiderable degree, and, to take more ſhame to ourſelves, we cheriſh them becauſe they are prejudices; and the longer they have laſted, and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cheriſh them. We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private ſtock of reaſon; becauſe we ſuſpect that the ſtock in each man is ſmall, and that the individuals would do better to avail themſelves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of ſpeculation, inſtead of exploding general prejudices, employ their ſagacity to diſcover the latent wiſdom which prevails in them. If they find what they ſeek, and they ſeldom fail, they think it more wiſe to continue the prejudice, with the reaſon involved, than to caſt away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reaſon; becauſe prejudice, with its reaſon, has a motive to give action to that reaſon, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previouſly engages the mind in a ſteady courſe of wiſdom and virtue, and does not leave the man heſitating in the moment of deciſion, ſceptical, puzzled, and unreſolved. Prejudice renders a man's

man's virtue his habit; and not a ſeries of unconnected acts. Through juſt prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.

Your literary men, and your politicians, and ſo do the whole clan of the enlightened among us, eſſentially differ in theſe points. They have no reſpect for the wiſdom of others; but they pay it off by a very full meaſure of confidence in their own. With them it is a ſufficient motive to deſtroy an old ſcheme of things, becauſe it is an old one. As to the new, they are in no ſort of fear with regard to the duration of a building run up in haſte; becauſe duration is no object to thoſe who think little or nothing has been done before their time, and who place all their hopes in diſcovery. They conceive, very ſyſtematically, that all things which give perpetuity are miſchievous, and therefore they are at inexpiable war with all eſtabliſhments. They think that government may vary like modes of dreſs, and with as little ill effect: that there needs no principle of attachment, except a ſenſe of preſent conveniency, to any conſtitution of the ſtate. They always ſpeak as if they were of opinion that there is a ſingular ſpecies of compact between them and their magiſtrates, which binds the magiſtrate, but which has nothing reciprocal in it, but that the majeſty of the people has a right to diſſolve it without any reaſon, but its will. Their attachment to their country

country itſelf is only ſo far as it agrees with ſome of their fleeting projects; it begins and ends with that ſcheme of polity which falls in with their momentary opinion.

Theſe doctrines, or rather ſentiments, ſeem prevalent with your new ſtateſmen. But they are wholly different from thoſe on which we have always acted in this country.

I hear it is ſometimes given out in France, that what is doing among you is after the example of England. I beg leave to affirm, that ſcarcely any thing done with you has originated from the practice or the prevalent opinions of this people, either in the act or in the ſpirit of the proceeding. Let me add, that we are as unwilling to learn theſe leſſons from France, as we are ſure that we never taught them to that nation. The cabals here who take a ſort of ſhare in your tranſactions, as yet conſiſt of but a handful of people. If unfortunately by their intrigues, their ſermons, their publications, and by a confidence derived from an expected union with the counſels and forces of the French nation, they ſhould draw conſiderable numbers into their faction, and in conſequence ſhould ſeriouſly attempt any thing here in imitation of what has been done with you, the event, I dare venture to propheſy, will be, that, with ſome trouble to their country, they will ſoon accompliſh their own deſtruction. This people refuſed

fuſed to change their law in remote ages, from reſpect to the infallibility of popes; and they will not now alter it from a pious implicit faith in the dogmatiſm of philoſophers; though the former was armed with the anathema and cruſade, and though the latter ſhould act with the libel and the lamp iron.

Formerly your affairs were your own concern only. We felt for them as men; but we kept aloof from them, becauſe we were not citizens of France. But when we ſee the model held up to ourſelves, we muſt feel as Engliſhmen, and feeling, we muſt provide as Engliſhmen. Your affairs, in ſpite of us, are made a part of our intereſt; ſo far at leaſt as to keep at a diſtance your panacea, or your plague. If it be a panacea, we do not want it. We know the conſequences of unneceſſary phyſick. If it be a plague; it is ſuch a plague that the precautions of the moſt ſevere quarantine ought to be eſtabliſhed againſt it.

I hear on all hands that a cabal, calling itſelf philoſophick, receives the glory of many of the late proceedings; and that their opinions and ſyſtems are the true actuating ſpirit of the whole of them. I have heard of no party in England, literary or political, at any time, known by ſuch a deſcription. It is not with you compoſed of thoſe men, is it? whom the vulgar, in their blunt homely ſtyle, commonly call Atheiſts and Infidels?

If

If it be, I admit that we too have had writers of that deſcription, who made ſome noiſe in their day. At preſent they repoſe in laſting oblivion. Who, born within the laſt forty years, has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, and Chubb, and Morgan, and that whole race who called themſelves Freethinkers? Who now reads Bolingbroke? Who ever read him through? Aſk the bookſellers of London what is become of all theſe lights of the world. In as few years their few ſucceſſors will go to the family vault of "all "the Capulets." But whatever they were, or are, with us, they were and are wholly unconnected individuals. With us they kept the common nature of their kind, and were not gregarious. They never acted in corps, or were known as a faction in the ſtate, nor preſumed to influence in that name or character, or for the purpoſes of ſuch a faction, on any of our publick concerns. Whether they ought ſo to exiſt, and ſo be permitted to act, is another queſtion. As ſuch cabals have not exiſted in England, ſo neither has the ſpirit of them had any influence in eſtabliſhing the original frame of our conſtitution, or in any one of the ſeveral reparations and improvements it has undergone. The whole has been done under the auſpices, and is confirmed by the ſanctions of religion and piety. The whole has emanated from the ſimplicity of our national cha-

racter, and from a ſort of native plainneſs and directneſs of underſtanding which for a long time characteriſed thoſe men who have ſucceſſively obtained authority among us. This diſpoſition ſtill remains, at leaſt in the great body of the people.

We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the baſis of civil ſociety, and the ſource of all good and of all comfort*. In England we are ſo convinced of this, that there is no ruſt of ſuperſtition, with which the accumulated abſurdity of the human mind might have cruſted it over in the courſe of ages, that ninety-nine in a hundred of the people of England would not prefer to impiety. We ſhall never be ſuch fools as to call in an enemy to the ſubſtance of any ſyſtem to remove its corruptions, to ſupply its defects, or to perfect its conſtruction. If our religious tenets ſhould ever want a further elucidation, we ſhall not call on atheiſm to explain them. We ſhall not light up our temple from that unhallowed fire. It will be illuminated with other lights. It

* Sit igitur hoc ab initio perſuaſum civibus, dominos eſſe omnium rerum ac moderatores, deos; eaque, quæ gerantur, eorum geri vi, ditione, ac numine; eoſdemque optime de genere hominum mereri; et qualis quiſque ſit, quid agat, quid in ſe admittat, qua mente qua pietate colat religiones intueri: piorum et impiorum habere rationem. His enim rebus imbutæ mentes haud ſane abhorrebunt ab utili et a vera ſententia. Cic. de Legibus, l. 2.

will

will be perfumed with other incenſe, than the infectious ſtuff which is imported by the ſmugglers of adulterated metaphyſicks. If our eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment ſhould want a reviſion, it is not avarice or rapacity, publick or private, that we ſhall employ for the audit, or receipt, or application of its conſecrated revenue. Violently condemning neither the Greek nor the Armenian, nor, ſince heats are ſubſided, the Roman ſyſtem of religion, we prefer the Proteſtant; not becauſe we think it has leſs of the Chriſtian religion in it, but becauſe, in our judgment, it has more. We are proteſtants, not from indifference but from zeal.

We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his conſtitution a religious animal; that atheiſm is againſt, not only our reaſon but our inſtincts; and that it cannot prevail long. But if, in the moment of riot, and in a drunken delirium from the hot ſpirit drawn out of the alembick of hell, which in France is now ſo furiouſly boiling, we ſhould uncover our nakedneſs by throwing off that Chriſtian religion which has hitherto been our boaſt and comfort, and one great ſource of civilization amongſt us, and among many other nations, we are apprehenſive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that ſome uncouth, pernicious, and degrading ſuperſtition, might take place of it.

For

For that reaſon, before we take from our eſtabliſhment the natural human means of eſtimation, and give it up to contempt, as you have done, and in doing it have incurred the penalties you well deſerve to ſuffer, we deſire that ſome other may be preſented to us in the place of it. We ſhall then form our judgment.

On theſe ideas, inſtead of quarrelling with eſtabliſhments, as ſome do, who have made a philoſophy and a religion of their hoſtility to ſuch inſtitutions, we cleave cloſely to them. We are reſolved to keep an eſtabliſhed church, an eſtabliſhed monarchy, an eſtabliſhed ariſtocracy, and an eſtabliſhed democracy, each in the degree it exiſts, and in no greater. I ſhall ſhew you preſently how much of each of theſe we poſſeſs.

It has been the misfortune (not as theſe gentlemen think it, the glory) of this age, that every thing is to be diſcuſſed, as if the conſtitution of our country were to be always a ſubject rather of altercation than enjoyment. For this reaſon, as well as for the ſatisfaction of thoſe among you (if any ſuch you have among you) who may wiſh to profit of examples, I venture to trouble you with a few thoughts upon each of theſe eſtabliſhments. I do not think they were unwiſe in ancient Rome, who, when they wiſhed to new model their laws, ſent commiſſioners to examine the beſt conſtituted republicks within their reach.

Firſt, I beg leave to ſpeak of our church eſtabliſhment, which is the firſt of our prejudices, not a prejudice deſtitute of reaſon, but involving in it profound and extenſive wiſdom. I ſpeak of it firſt. It is firſt, and laſt, and midſt in our minds. For, taking ground on that religious ſyſtem, of which we are now in poſſeſſion, we continue to act on the early received, and uniformly continued ſenſe of mankind. That ſenſe not only, like a wiſe architect, hath built up the auguſt fabrick of ſtates, but like a provident proprietor, to preſerve the ſtructure from prophanation and ruin, as a ſacred temple, purged from all the impurities of fraud, and violence, and injuſtice, and tyranny, hath ſolemnly and for ever conſecrated the commonwealth, and all that officiate in it. This conſecration is made, that all who adminiſter in the government of men, in which they ſtand in the perſon of God himſelf, ſhould have high and worthy notions of their function and deſtination; that their hope ſhould be full of immortality; that they ſhould not look to the paltry pelf of the moment, nor to the temporary and tranſient praiſe of the vulgar, but to a ſolid permanent exiſtence, in the permanent part of their nature, and to a permanent fame and glory, in the example they leave as a rich inheritance to the world.

Such ſublime principles ought to be infuſed into perſons of exalted ſituations; and religious eſtabliſhments

bliſhments provided, that may continually revive and enforce them. Every ſort of moral, every ſort of civil, every ſort of politick inſtitution, aiding the rational and natural ties that connect the human underſtanding and affections to the divine, are not more than neceſſary, in order to build up that wonderful ſtructure, Man; whoſe prerogative it is, to be in a great degree a creature of his own making; and who when made as he ought to be made, is deſtined to hold no trivial place in the creation. But whenever man is put over men, as the better nature ought ever to preſide, in that caſe more particularly, he ſhould as nearly as poſſible be approximated to his perfection.

The conſecration of the ſtate, by a ſtate religious eſtabliſhment, is neceſſary alſo to operate with a wholeſome awe upon free citizens; becauſe, in order to ſecure their freedom, they muſt enjoy ſome determinate portion of power. To them therefore a religion connected with the ſtate, and with their duty towards it, becomes even more neceſſary than in ſuch ſocieties, where the people by the terms of their ſubjection are confined to private ſentiments, and the management of their own family concerns. All perſons poſſeſſing any portion of power ought to be ſtrongly and awfully impreſſed with an idea that they act in truſt; and that they are to account for their conduct in that

truſt to the one great maſter, author and founder of ſociety.

This principle ought even to be more ſtrongly impreſſed upon the minds of thoſe who compoſe the collective ſovereignty than upon thoſe of ſingle princes. Without inſtruments, theſe princes can do nothing. Whoever uſes inſtruments, in finding helps, finds alſo impediments. Their power is therefore by no means complete; nor are they ſafe in extreme abuſe. Such perſons, however elevated by flattery, arrogance, and ſelf-opinion, muſt be ſenſible that, whether covered or not by poſitive law, in ſome way or other they are accountable even here for the abuſe of their truſt. If they are not cut off by a rebellion of their people, they may be ſtrangled by the very janiſſaries kept for their ſecurity againſt all other rebellion. Thus we have ſeen the king of France ſold by his ſoldiers for an increaſe of pay. But where popular authority is abſolute and unreſtrained, the people have an infinitely greater, becauſe a far better founded confidence in their own power. They are themſelves, in a great meaſure, their own inſtruments. They are nearer to their objects. Beſides, they are leſs under reſponſibility to one of the greateſt controlling powers on earth, the ſenſe of frame and eſtimation. The ſhare of infamy that is likely to fall to the lot of each indi-

vidual

vidual in publick acts, is ſmall indeed; the operation of opinion being in the inverſe ratio to the number of thoſe who abuſe power. Their own approbation of their own acts has to them the appearance of a publick judgment in their favour. A perfect democracy is therefore the moſt ſhameleſs thing in the world. As it is the moſt ſhameleſs, it is alſo the moſt fearleſs. No man apprehends in his perſon he can be made ſubject to puniſhment. Certainly the people at large never ought: for as all puniſhments are for example towards the conſervation of the people at large, the people at large can never become the ſubject of puniſhment by any human hand*. It is therefore of infinite importance that they ſhould not be ſuffered to imagine that their will, any more than that of kings, is the ſtandard of right and wrong. They ought to be perſuaded that they are full as little entitled, and far leſs qualified, with ſafety to themſelves, to uſe any arbitrary power whatſoever; that therefore they are not, under a falſe ſhew of liberty, but, in truth, to exerciſe an unnatural inverted domination, tyrannically to exact, from thoſe who officiate in the ſtate, not an entire devotion to their intereſt, which is their right, but an abject ſubmiſſion to their occaſional will; extinguiſhing thereby, in all thoſe who ſerve them, all

* Quicquid multis peccatur inultum.

moral principle, all ſenſe of dignity, all uſe of judgment, and all conſiſtency of character, whilſt by the very ſame proceſs they give themſelves up a proper, a ſuitable, but a moſt contemptible prey to the ſervile ambition of popular ſycophants or courtly flatterers.

When the people have emptied themſelves of all the luſt of ſelfiſh will, which without religion it is utterly impoſſible they ever ſhould, when they are conſcious that they exerciſe, and exerciſe perhaps in a higher link of the order of delegation, the power, which to be legitimate muſt be according to that eternal immutable law, in which will and reaſon are the ſame, they will be more careful how they place power in baſe and incapable hands. In their nomination to office, they will not appoint to the exerciſe of authority, as to a pitiful job, but as to a holy function; not according to their ſordid ſelfiſh intereſt, nor to their wanton caprice, nor to their arbitrary will; but they will confer that power (which any man may well tremble to give or to receive) on thoſe only, in whom they may diſcern that predominant proportion of active virtue and wiſdom, taken together and fitted to the charge, ſuch, as in the great and inevitable mixed maſs of human imperfections and infirmities, is to be found.

When they are habitually convinced that no evil can be acceptable, either in the act or the permiſſion,

miſſion, to him whoſe eſſence is good, they will be better able to extirpate out of the minds of all magiſtrates, civil, eccleſiaſtical, or military, any thing that bears the leaſt reſemblance to a proud and lawleſs domination.

But one of the firſt and moſt leading principles on which the commonwealth and the laws are conſecrated, is leſt the temporary poſſeſſors and life-renters in it, unmindful of what they have received from their anceſtors, or of what is due to their poſterity, ſhould act as if they were the entire maſters; that they ſhould not think it amongſt their rights to cut off the entail, or commit waſte on the inheritance, by deſtroying at their pleaſure the whole original fabrick of their ſociety; hazarding to leave to thoſe who come after them, a ruin inſtead of an habitation—and teaching theſe ſucceſſors as little to reſpect their contrivances, as they had themſelves reſpected the inſtitutions of their forefathers. By this unprincipled facility of changing the ſtate as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or faſhions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a ſummer.

And firſt of all, the ſcience of juriſprudence, the pride of the human intellect, which, with all its

defects, redundancies, and errours, is the collected reaſon of ages, combining the principles of original juſtice with the infinite variety of human concerns, as a heap of old exploded errours, would be no longer ſtudied. Perſonal ſelf-ſufficiency and arrogance (the certain attendants upon all thoſe who have never experienced a wiſdom greater than their own) would uſurp the tribunal. Of courſe, no certain laws, eſtabliſhing invariable grounds of hope and fear, would keep the actions of men in a certain courſe, or direct them to a certain end. Nothing ſtable in the modes of holding property, or exerciſing function, could form a ſolid ground on which any parent could ſpeculate in the education of his offspring, or in a choice for their future eſtabliſhment in the world. No principles would be early worked into the habits. As ſoon as the moſt able inſtructor had completed his laborious courſe of inſtitution, inſtead of ſending forth his pupil, accompliſhed in a virtuous diſcipline, fitted to procure him attention and reſpect, in his place in ſociety, he would find every thing altered; and that he had turned out a poor creature to the contempt and deriſion of the world, ignorant of the true grounds of eſtimation. Who would inſure a tender and delicate ſenſe of honour to beat almoſt with the firſt pulſes of the heart, when no man could know what would be the teſt of honour in a nation, continually varying the ſtandard of its coin?

coin? No part of life would retain its acquiſitions. Barbariſm with regard to ſcience and literature, unſkilfulneſs with regard to arts and manufactures, would infallibly ſucceed to the want of a ſteady education and ſettled principle; and thus the commonwealth itſelf would, in a few generations, crumble away, be diſconnected into the duſt and powder of individuality, and at length diſperſed to all the winds of heaven.

To avoid therefore the evils of inconſtancy and verſatility, ten thouſand times worſe than thoſe of obſtinacy and the blindeſt prejudice, we have conſecrated the ſtate, that no man ſhould approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution; that he ſhould never dream of beginning its reformation by its ſubverſion; that he ſhould approach to the faults of the ſtate as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling ſolicitude. By this wiſe prejudice we are taught to look with horrour on thoſe children of their country who are prompt raſhly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poiſonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal conſtitution, and renovate their father's life.

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occaſional intereſt may be diſſolved at pleaſure—but the ſtate ought not

to be conſidered as nothing better than a partnerſhip agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, callico or tobacco, or ſome other ſuch low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary intereſt, and to be diſſolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; becauſe it is not a partnerſhip in things ſubſervient only to the groſs animal exiſtence of a temporary and periſhable nature. It is a partnerſhip in all ſcience; a partnerſhip in all art; a partnerſhip in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of ſuch a partnerſhip cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnerſhip not only between thoſe who are living, but between thoſe who are living, thoſe who are dead, and thoſe who are to be born. Each contract of each particular ſtate is but a clauſe in the great primæval contract of eternal ſociety, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the viſible and inviſible world, according to a fixed compact ſanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all phyſical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place. This law is not ſubject to the will of thoſe, who by an obligation above them, and infinitely ſuperiour, are bound to ſubmit their will to that law. The municipal corporations of that univerſal kingdom are not morally at liberty at their pleaſure, and on their ſpeculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to ſeparate and tear aſunder the bands of their ſubordinate

ſubordinate community, and to diſſolve it into an unſocial, uncivil, unconnected chaos of elementary principles. It is the firſt and ſupreme neceſſity only, a neceſſity that is not choſen, but chooſes, a neceſſity paramount to deliberation, that admits no diſcuſſion, and demands no evidence, which alone can juſtify a reſort to anarchy. This neceſſity is no exception to the rule; becauſe this neceſſity itſelf is a part too of that moral and phyſical diſpoſition of things to which man muſt be obedient by conſent or force; but if that which is only ſubmiſſion to neceſſity ſhould be made the object of choice, the law is broken, nature is diſobeyed, and the rebellious are outlawed, caſt forth, and exiled, from this world of reaſon, and order, and peace, and virtue, and fruitful penitence, into the antagoniſt world of madneſs, diſcord, vice, confuſion, and unavailing ſorrow.

Theſe, my dear Sir, are, were, and I think long will be, the ſentiments of not the leaſt learned and reflecting part of this kingdom. They who are included in this deſcription, form their opinions on ſuch grounds as ſuch perſons ought to form them. The leſs inquiring receive them from an authority, which thoſe whom Providence dooms to live on truſt need not be aſhamed to rely on. Theſe two ſorts of men move in the ſame direction, though in a different place. They both move with the order of the univerſe. They all know

or feel this great ancient truth: "Quod illi prin-
"cipi et præpotenti Deo qui omnem hunc mun-
"dum regit, nihil eorum quæ quidem fiant in
"terris acceptius quam concilia et cætus hominum
"jure fociati quæ civitates appellantur." They take this tenet of the head and heart, not from the great name which it immediately bears, nor from the greater from whence it is derived; but from that which alone can give true weight and fanction to any learned opinion, the common nature and common relation of men. Perfuaded that all things ought to be done with reference, and referring all to the point of reference to which all fhould be directed, they think themfelves bound, not only as individuals in the fanctuary of the heart, or as congregated in that perfonal capacity, to renew the memory of their high origin and caft; but alfo in their corporate character to perform their national homage to the inftitutor, and author and protector of civil fociety; without which civil fociety man could not by any poffibility arrive at the perfection of which his nature is capable, nor even make a remote and faint approach to it. They conceive that He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed alfo the neceffary means of its perfection—He willed therefore the ftate—He willed its connection with the fource and original archetype of all perfection. They who are convinced of this his will, which is the

the law of laws and the ſovereign of ſovereigns, cannot think it reprehenſible that this our corporate fealty and homage, that this our recognition of a ſigniory paramount, I had almoſt ſaid this oblation of the ſtate itſelf, as a worthy offering on the high altar of univerſal praiſe, ſhould be performed as all publick ſolemn acts are performed, in buildings, in muſick, in decoration, in ſpeech, in the dignity of perſons, according to the cuſtoms of mankind, taught by their nature; that is, with modeſt ſplendour, with unaſſuming ſtate, with mild majeſty and ſober pomp. For thoſe purpoſes they think ſome part of the wealth of the country is as uſefully employed as it can be, in fomenting the luxury of individuals. It is the publick ornament. It is the publick conſolation. It nouriſhes the publick hope. The pooreſt man finds his own importance and dignity in it, whilſt the wealth and pride of individuals at every moment makes the man of humble rank and fortune ſenſible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It is for the man in humble life, and to raiſe his nature, and to put him in mind of a ſtate in which the privileges of opulence will ceaſe, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue, that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and ſanctified.

I aſſure you I do not aim at ſingularity. I give you

you opinions which have been accepted amongſt us, from very early times to this moment, with a continued and general approbation, and which indeed are ſo worked into my mind, that I am unable to diſtinguiſh what I have learned from others from the reſults of my own meditation.

It is on ſome ſuch principles that the majority of the people of England, far from thinking a religious national eſtabliſhment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. In France you are wholly miſtaken if you do not believe us above all other things attached to it, and beyond all other nations; and when this people has acted unwiſely and unjuſtifiably in its favour (as in ſome inſtances they have done moſt certainly) in their very errours you will at leaſt diſcover their zeal.

This principle runs through the whole ſyſtem of their polity. They do not conſider their church eſtabliſhment as convenient, but as eſſential to their ſtate; not as a thing heterogeneous and ſeparable; ſomething added for accommodation; what they may either keep up or lay aſide, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They conſider it as the foundation of their whole conſtitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indiſſoluble union. Church and ſtate are ideas inſeparable in their minds, and ſcarcely is the one ever mentioned without mentioning the other.

Our

Our education is ſo formed as to confirm and fix this impreſſion. Our education is in a manner wholly in the hands of eccleſiaſticks, and in all ſtages from infancy to manhood. Even when our youth, leaving ſchools and univerſities, enter that moſt important period of life which begins to link experience and ſtudy together, and when with that view they viſit other countries, inſtead of old domeſticks whom we have ſeen as governours to principal men from other parts, three-fourths of thoſe who go abroad with our young nobility and gentlemen are eccleſiaſticks; not as auſtere maſters, nor as mere followers; but as friends and companions of a graver character, and not ſeldom perſons as well born as themſelves. With them, as relations, they moſt commonly keep up a cloſe connection through life. By this connection we conceive that we attach our gentlemen to the church; and we liberalize the church by an intercourſe with the leading characters of the country.

So tenacious are we of the old eccleſiaſtical modes and faſhions of inſtitution, that very little alteration has been made in them ſince the fourteenth or fifteenth century; adhering in this particular, as in all things elſe, to our old ſettled maxim, never entirely nor at once to depart from antiquity. We found theſe old inſtitutions, on the whole, favourable to morality and diſcipline; and

and we thought they were ſuſceptible of amendment, without altering the ground. We thought that they were capable of receiving and meliorating, and above all of preſerving, the acceſſions of ſcience and literature, as the order of Providence ſhould ſucceſſively produce them. And after all, with this gothick and monkiſh education (for ſuch it is in the ground-work) we may put in our claim to as ample and as early a ſhare in all the improvements in ſcience, in arts, and in literature, which have illuminated and adorned the modern world, as any other nation in Europe; we think one main cauſe of this improvement was our not deſpiſing the patrimony of knowledge which was left us by our forefathers.

It is from our attachment to a church eſtabliſhment that the Engliſh nation did not think it wiſe to entruſt that great fundamental intereſt of the whole to what they truſt no part of their civil or military publick ſervice, that is, to the unſteady and precarious contribution of individuals. They go further. They certainly never have ſuffered and never will ſuffer the fixed eſtate of the church to be converted into a penſion, to depend on the treaſury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps to be extinguiſhed by fiſcal difficulties; which difficulties may ſometimes be pretended for political purpoſes, and are in fact often brought on by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politi-

cians. The people of England think that they have conſtitutional motives, as well as religious, againſt any project of turning their independent clergy into eccleſiaſtical penſioners of ſtate. They tremble for their liberty, from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown; they tremble for the publick tranquillity from the diſorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend upon any other than the crown. They therefore made their church, like their king and their nobility, independent.

From the united conſiderations of religion and conſtitutional policy, from their opinion of a duty to make a ſure proviſion for the conſolation of the feeble and the inſtruction of the ignorant, they have incorporated and identified the eſtate of the church with the maſs of *private property*, of which the ſtate is not the proprietor, either for uſe or dominion, but the guardian only and the regulator. They have ordained that the proviſion of this eſtabliſhment might be as ſtable as the earth on which it ſtands, and ſhould not fluctuate with the Euripus of funds and actions.

The men of England, the men, I mean, of light and leading in England, whoſe wiſdom (if they have any) is open and direct, would be aſhamed, as of a ſilly deceitful trick, to profeſs any religion in name, which by their proceedings they appear to contemn. If by their conduct (the only language

guage that rarely lies) they ſeemed to regard the great ruling principle of the moral and the natural world, as a mere invention to keep the vulgar in obedience, they apprehend that by ſuch a conduct they would defeat the politick purpoſe they have in view. They would find it difficult to make others believe in a ſyſtem to which they manifeſtly gave no credit themſelves. The chriſtian ſtateſmen of this land would indeed firſt provide for the *multitude;* becauſe it is the *multitude;* and is therefore, as ſuch, the firſt object in the eccleſiaſtical inſtitution, and in all inſtitutions. They have been taught, that the circumſtance of the goſpel's being preached to the poor, was one of the great teſts of its true miſſion. They think, therefore, that thoſe do not believe it, who do not take care it ſhould be preached to the poor. But as they know that charity is not confined to any one deſcription, but ought to apply itſelf to all men who have wants, they are not deprived of a due and anxious ſenſation of pity to the diſtreſſes of the miſerable great. They are not repelled through a faſtidious delicacy, at the ſtench of their arrogance and preſumption, from a medicinal attention to their mental blotches and running ſores. They are ſenſible, that religious inſtruction is of more conſequence to them than to any others; from the greatneſs of the temptation to which they are expoſed; from the important conſequences

ſequences that attend their faults; from the contagion of their ill example; from the neceſſity of bowing down the ſtubborn neck of their pride and ambition to the yoke of moderation and virtue; from a conſideration of the fat ſtupidity and groſs ignorance concerning what imports men moſt to know, which prevails at courts, and at the head of armies, and in ſenates, as much as at the loom and in the field.

The Engliſh people are ſatisfied, that to the great the conſolations of religion are as neceſſary as its inſtructions. They too are among the unhappy. They feel perſonal pain and domeſtick ſorrow. In theſe they have no privilege; but are ſubject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this ſovereign balm under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which being leſs converſant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diverſified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to theſe, our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; ſomething to relieve in the killing languor and over-laboured laſſitude of thoſe who have nothing to do; ſomething to excite an appetite to exiſtence in the palled fatiety which attends on all pleaſures which may be bought, where nature is

not left to her own proceſs, where even deſire is anticipated, and therefore fruition defeated by meditated ſchemes and contrivances of delight; and no interval, no obſtacle, is interpoſed between the wiſh and the accompliſhment.

The people of England know how little influence the teachers of religion are likely to have with the wealthy and powerful of long ſtanding, and how much leſs with the newly fortunate, if they appear in a manner no way aſſorted to thoſe with whom they muſt aſſociate, and over whom they muſt even exerciſe, in ſome caſes, ſomething like an authority. What muſt they think of that body of teachers, if they ſee it in no part above the eſtabliſhment of their domeſtick ſervants? If the poverty were voluntary, there might be ſome difference. Strong inſtances of ſelf-denial operate powerfully on our minds; and a man who has no wants has obtained great freedom and firmneſs, and even dignity. But as the maſs of any deſcription of men are but men, and their poverty cannot be voluntary, that diſreſpect which attends upon all lay property, will not depart from the eccleſiaſtical. Our provident conſtitution has therefore taken care that thoſe who are to inſtruct preſumptuous ignorance, thoſe who are to be cenſors over inſolent vice, ſhould neither incur their contempt, nor live upon their alms; nor will it tempt the rich to a neglect of the true medicine of their minds.

minds. For theſe reaſons, whilſt we provide firſt for the poor, and with a parental ſolicitude, we have not relegated religion (like ſomething we were aſhamed to ſhew) to obſcure municipalities or ruſtick villages. No! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments. We will have her mixed throughout the whole maſs of life, and blended with all the claſſes of ſociety. The people of England will ſhew to the haughty potentates of the world, and to their talking ſophiſters, that a free, a generous, an informed nation, honours the high magiſtrates of its church; that it will not ſuffer the inſolence of wealth and titles, or any other ſpecies of proud pretenſion, to look down with ſcorn upon what they look up to with reverence; nor preſume to trample on that acquired perſonal nobility, which they intend always to be, and which often is, the fruit, not the reward, (for what can be the reward?) of learning, piety, and virtue. They can ſee, without pain or grudging, an archbiſhop precede a duke. They can ſee a biſhop of Durham, or a biſhop of Wincheſter, in poſſeſſion of ten thouſand pounds a year; and cannot conceive why it is in worſe hands than eſtates to the like amount in the hands of this earl, or that ſquire; although it may be true, that ſo many dogs and horſes are not kept by the former, and fed with the victuals which ought to nouriſh the children of the people. It

is true, the whole church revenue is not always employed, and to every ſhilling, in charity; nor perhaps ought it; but ſomething is generally ſo employed. It is better to cheriſh virtue and humanity, by leaving much to free will, even with ſome loſs to the object, than to attempt to make men mere machines and inſtruments of a political benevolence. The world on the whole will gain by a liberty, without which virtue cannot exiſt.

When once the commonwealth has eſtabliſhed the eſtates of the church as property, it can, conſiſtently, hear nothing of the more or the leſs. Too much and too little are treaſon againſt property. What evil can ariſe from the quantity in any hand, whilſt the ſupreme authority has the full, ſovereign ſuperintendance over this, as over any property, to prevent every ſpecies of abuſe; and, whenever it notably deviates, to give to it a direction agreeable to the purpoſes of its inſtitution.

In England moſt of us conceive that it is envy and malignity towards thoſe who are often the beginners of their own fortune, and not a love of the ſelf-denial and mortification of the ancient church, that makes ſome look aſkance at the diſtinctions, and honours, and revenues, which, taken from no perſon, are ſet apart for virtue. The ears of the people of England are diſtinguiſhing. They hear theſe men ſpeak broad. Their tongue betrays

trays them. Their language is in the *patois* of fraud; in the cant and gibberiſh of hypocriſy. The people of England muſt think ſo, when theſe praters affect to carry back the clergy to that primitive evangelick poverty, which, in the ſpirit, ought always to exiſt in them, (and in us too, however we may like it) but in the thing muſt be varied, when the relation of that body to the ſtate is altered; when manners, when modes of life, when indeed the whole order of human affairs has undergone a total revolution. We ſhall believe thoſe reformers to be then honeſt enthuſiaſts, not as now we think them, cheats and deceivers, when we ſee them throwing their own goods into common, and ſubmitting their own perſons to the auſtere diſcipline of the early church.

With theſe ideas rooted in their minds, the commons of Great Britain, in the national emergencies, will never ſeek their reſource from the confiſcation of the eſtates of the church and poor. Sacrilege and proſcription are not among the ways and means of our committee of ſupply. The Jews in Change-alley have not yet dared to hint their hopes of a mortgage on the revenues belonging to the ſee of Canterbury. I am not afraid that I ſhall be diſavowed, when I aſſure you, that there is not *one* publick man in this kingdom, whom you would wiſh to quote; no not one of any party or deſcription, who does not reprobate

the diſhoneſt, perfidious, and cruel confiſcation which the national aſſembly has been compelled to make, of that property which it was their firſt duty to protect.

It is with the exultation of a little national pride I tell you, that thoſe amongſt us who have wiſhed to pledge the ſocieties of Paris in the cup of their abominations, have been diſappointed. The robbery of your church has proved a ſecurity to the poſſeſſions of ours. It has rouſed the people. They ſee with horrour and alarm that enormous and ſhameleſs act of proſcription. It has opened, and will more and more open, their eyes upon the ſelfiſh enlargement of mind, and the narrow liberality of ſentiment of inſidious men, which, commencing in cloſe hypocriſy and fraud, have ended in open violence and rapine. At home we behold ſimilar beginnings. We are on our guard againſt ſimilar concluſions.

I hope we ſhall never be ſo totally loſt to all ſenſe of the duties impoſed upon us by the law of ſocial union, as, upon any pretext of publick ſervice, to confiſcate the goods of a ſingle unoffending citizen. Who but a tyrant (a name expreſſive of every thing which can vitiate and degrade human nature) could think of ſeizing on the property of men, unaccuſed, unheard, untried, by whole deſcriptions, by hundreds and thouſands together? Who that had not loſt every trace of humanity,

humanity, could think of caſting down men of exalted rank and ſacred function, ſome of them of an age to call at once for reverence and compaſſion, of caſting them down from the higheſt ſituation in the commonwealth, wherein they were maintained by their own landed property, to a ſtate of indigence, depreſſion, and contempt?

The confiſcators truly have made ſome allowance to their victims from the ſcraps and fragments of their own tables, from which they have been ſo harſhly driven, and which have been ſo bountifully ſpread for a feaſt to the harpies of uſury. But to drive men from independence to live on alms, is itſelf great cruelty. That which might be a tolerable condition to men in one ſtate of life, and not habituated to other things, may, when all theſe circumſtances are altered, be a dreadful revolution; and one to which a virtuous mind would feel pain in condemning any guilt, except that which would demand the life of the offender. But to many minds this puniſhment of *degradation* and *infamy* is worſe than death. Undoubtedly it is an infinite aggravation of this cruel ſuffering, that the perſons who were taught a double prejudice in favour of religion, by education, and by the place they held in the adminiſtration of its functions, are to receive the remnants of the property as alms from the profane and impious hands of thoſe who had plundered them of all the reſt;

to receive (if they are at all to receive) not from the charitable contributions of the faithful, but from the inſolent tenderneſs of known and avowed atheiſm, the maintenance of religion, meaſured out to them on the ſtandard of the contempt in which it is held; and for the purpoſe of rendering thoſe who receive the allowance vile, and of no eſtimation in the eyes of mankind.

But this act of ſeizure of property, it ſeems, is a judgment in law, and not a confiſcation. They have, it ſeems, found out in the academies of the *Palais Royal*, and the *Jacobins*, that certain men had no right to the poſſeſſions which they held under law, uſage, the deciſions of courts, and the accumulated preſcription of a thouſand years. They ſay that eccleſiaſticks are fictitious perſons, creatures of the ſtate, whom at pleaſure they may deſtroy, and of courſe limit and modify in every particular; that the goods they poſſeſs are not properly theirs, but belong to the ſtate which created the fiction; and we are therefore not to trouble ourſelves with what they may ſuffer in their natural feelings and natural perſons, on account of what is done towards them in this their conſtructive character. Of what import is it, under what names you injure men, and deprive them of the juſt emoluments of a profeſſion, in which they were not only permitted but encouraged by the ſtate to engage; and upon the ſuppoſed certainty of

of which emoluments they had formed the plan of their lives, contracted debts, and led multitudes to an entire dependence upon them?

You do not imagine, Sir, that I am going to compliment this miſerable diſtinction of perſons with any long diſcuſſion. The arguments of tyranny are as contemptible as its force is dreadful. Had not your confiſcators, by their early crimes, obtained a power which ſecures indemnity to all the crimes of which they have ſince been guilty, or that they can commit, it is not the ſyllogiſm of the logician, but the laſh of the executioner that would have refuted a ſophiſtry which becomes an accomplice of theft and murder. The ſophiſtick tyrants of Paris are loud in their declamations againſt the departed regal tyrants, who in former ages have vexed the world. They are thus bold, becauſe they are ſafe from the dungeons and iron cages of their old maſters. Shall we be more tender of the tyrants of our own time, when we ſee them acting worſe tragedies under our eyes? ſhall we not uſe the ſame liberty that they do, when we can uſe it with the ſame ſafety? when to ſpeak honeſt truth only requires a contempt of the opinions of thoſe whoſe actions we abhor?

This outrage on all the rights of property was at firſt covered with what, on the ſyſtem of their conduct, was the moſt aſtoniſhing of all pretexts —a regard to national faith. The enemies to property

perty at firſt pretended a moſt tender, delicate, and ſcrupulous anxiety for keeping the king's engagements with the publick creditor. Theſe profeſſors of the rights of men are ſo buſy in teaching others, that they have not leiſure to learn any thing themſelves; otherwiſe they would have known, that it is to the property of the citizen, and not to the demands of the creditor of the ſtate, that the firſt and original faith of civil ſociety is pledged. The claim of the citizen is prior in time, paramount in title, ſuperiour in equity. The fortunes of individuals, whether poſſeſſed by acquiſition, or by deſcent, or in virtue of a participation in the goods of ſome community, were no part of the creditor's ſecurity, expreſſed or implied. They never ſo much as entered into his head when he made his bargain. He well knew that the publick, whether repreſented by a monarch or by a ſenate, can pledge nothing but the publick eſtate; and it can have no publick eſtate, except in what it derives from a juſt and proportioned impoſition upon the citizens at large. This was engaged, and nothing elſe could be engaged to the publick creditor. No man can mortgage his injuſtice as a pawn for his fidelity.

It is impoſſible to avoid ſome obſervation on the contradictions cauſed by the extreme rigour and the extreme laxity of this new publick faith, which influenced in this tranſaction, and which influenced

influenced not according to the nature of the obligation, but to the deſcription of the perſons to whom it was engaged. No acts of the old government of the kings of France are held valid in the national aſſembly, except its pecuniary engagements; acts of all others of the moſt ambiguous legality. The reſt of the acts of that royal government are conſidered in ſo odious a light, that to have a claim under its authority is looked on as a ſort of crime. A penſion, given as a reward for ſervice to the ſtate, is ſurely as good a ground of property as any ſecurity for money advanced to the ſtate. It is a better; for money is paid, and well paid, to obtain that ſervice. We have however ſeen multitudes of people under this deſcription in France, who never had been deprived of their allowances by the moſt arbitrary miniſters, in the moſt arbitrary times, by this aſſembly of the rights of men, robbed without mercy. They were ſold, in anſwer to their claim to the bread earned with their blood, that their ſervices had not been rendered to the country that now exiſts.

This laxity of publick faith is not confined to thoſe unfortunate perſons. The aſſembly, with perfect conſiſtency it muſt be owned, is engaged in a reſpectable deliberation how far it is bound by the treaties made with other nations under the former government, and their committee is to report which of them they ought to ratify, and which

which not. By this means they have put the external fidelity of this virgin ſtate on a par with its internal.

It is not eaſy to conceive upon what rational principle the royal government ſhould not, of the two, rather have poſſeſſed the power of rewarding ſervice, and making treaties, in virtue of its prerogative, than that of pledging to creditors the revenue of the ſtate, actual and poſſible. The treaſure of the nation, of all things, has been the leaſt allowed to the prerogative of the king of France, or to the prerogative of any king in Europe. To mortgage the publick revenue implies the ſovereign dominion, in the fulleſt ſenſe, over the publick purſe. It goes far beyond the truſt even of a temporary and occaſional taxation. The acts however of that dangerous power (the diſtinctive mark of a boundleſs deſpotiſm) have been alone held ſacred. Whence aroſe this preference given by a democratick aſſembly to a body of property deriving its title from the moſt critical and obnoxious of all the exertions of monarchical authority? Reaſon can furniſh nothing to reconcile inconſiſtency; nor can partial favour be accounted for upon equitable principles. But the contradiction and partiality which admit no juſtification, are not the leſs without an adequate cauſe; and that cauſe I do not think it difficult to diſcover.

By the vaſt debt of France a great monied intereſt

reſt has inſenſibly grown up, and with it a great power. By the ancient uſages which prevailed in that kingdom, the general circulation of property, and in particular the mutual convertibility of land into money, and of money into land, had always been a matter of difficulty. Family ſettlements, rather more general and more ſtrict than they are in England, the *jus retractus*, the great maſs of landed property held by the crown, and by a maxim of the French law held unalienably, the vaſt eſtates of the eccleſiaſtick corporations,—all theſe had kept the landed and monied intereſts more ſeparated in France, leſs miſcible, and the owners of the two diſtinct ſpecies of property not ſo well diſpoſed to each other as they are in this country.

The monied property was long looked on with rather an evil eye by the people. They ſaw it connected with their diſtreſſes, and aggravating them. It was no leſs envied by the old landed intereſts, partly for the ſame reaſons that rendered it obnoxious to the people, but much more ſo as it eclipſed, by the ſplendour of an oſtentatious luxury, the unendowed pedigrees and naked titles of ſeveral among the nobility. Even when the nobility, which repreſented the more permanent landed intereſt, united themſelves by marriage (which ſometimes was the caſe) with the other deſcription, the wealth which ſaved the family from

from ruin, was ſuppoſed to contaminate and degrade it. Thus the enmities and heart-burnings of theſe parties were increaſed even by the uſual means by which diſcord is made to ceaſe, and quarrels are turned into friendſhip. In the mean time, the pride of the wealthy men, not noble or newly noble, increaſed with its cauſe. They felt with reſentment an inferiority, the grounds of which they did not acknowledge. There was no meaſure to which they were not willing to lend themſelves, in order to be revenged of the outrages of this rival pride, and to exalt their wealth to what they conſidered as its natural rank and eſtimation. They ſtruck at the nobility through the crown and the church. They attacked them particularly on the ſide on which they thought them the moſt vulnerable, that is, the poſſeſſions of the church, which, through the patronage of the crown, generally devolved upon the nobility. The biſhopricks, and the great commendatory abbies, were, with few exceptions, held by that order.

In this ſtate of real, though not always perceived warfare between the noble ancient landed intereſt, and the new monied intereſt, the greateſt becauſe the moſt applicable ſtrength was in the hands of the latter. The monied intereſt is in its nature more ready for any adventure; and its poſſeſſors more diſpoſed to new enterpriſes of any kind.

kind. Being of a recent acquiſition, it falls in more naturally with any novelties. It is therefore the kind of wealth which will be reſorted to by all who wiſh for change.

Along with the monied intereſt, a new deſcription of men had grown up, with whom that intereſt ſoon formed a cloſe and marked union; I mean the political men of letters. Men of letters, fond of diſtinguiſhing themſelves, are rarely averſe to innovation. Since the decline of the life and greatneſs of Louis the Fourteenth, they were not ſo much cultivated either by him, or by the regent, or the ſucceſſors to the crown; nor were they engaged to the court by favours and emoluments ſo ſyſtematically as during the ſplendid period of that oſtentatious and not impolitick reign. What they loſt in the old court protection, they endeavoured to make up by joining in a ſort of incorporation of their own; to which the two academies of France, and afterwards the vaſt undertaking of the Encyclopædia, carried on by a ſociety of theſe gentlemen, did not a little contribute.

The literary cabal had ſome years ago formed ſomething like a regular plan for the deſtruction of the chriſtian religion. This object they purſued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been diſcovered only in the propagators of ſome ſyſtem of piety. They were poſſeſſed with a ſpirit

of proſelytiſm in the moſt fanatical degree; and from thence, by an eaſy progreſs, with the ſpirit of perſecution according to their means *. What was not to be done towards their great end by any direct or immediate act, might be wrought by a longer proceſs through the medium of opinion. To command that opinion, the firſt ſtep is to eſtabliſh a dominion over thoſe who direct it. They contrived to poſſeſs themſelves, with great method and perſeverance, of all the avenues to literary fame. Many of them indeed ſtood high in the ranks of literature and ſcience. The world had done them juſtice; and in favour of general talents forgave the evil tendency of their peculiar principles. This was true liberality; which they returned by endeavouring to confine the reputation of ſenſe, learning, and taſte to themſelves or their followers. I will venture to ſay that this narrow, excluſive ſpirit has not been leſs prejudicial to literature and to taſte, than to morals and true philoſophy. Theſe atheiſtical fathers have a bigotry of their own; and they have learnt to talk againſt monks with the ſpirit of a monk. But in ſome things they are men of the world. The reſources of intrigue are called in to ſupply the defects of argument and wit. To this ſyſtem

* This (down to the end of the firſt ſentence in the next paragraph) and ſome other parts here and there, were inſerted, on his reading the manuſcript, by my loſt ſon.

of

of literary monopoly was joined an unremitting induſtry to blacken and diſcredit in every way, and by every means, all thoſe who did not hold to their faction. To thoſe who have obſerved the ſpirit of their conduct, it has long been clear that nothing was wanted but the power of carrying the intolerance of the tongue and of the pen into a perſecution which would ſtrike at property, liberty, and life.

The deſultory and faint perſecution carried on againſt them, more from compliance with form and decency than with ſerious reſentment, neither weakened their ſtrength, nor relaxed their efforts. The iſſue of the whole was, that what with oppoſition, and what with ſucceſs, a violent and malignant zeal, of a kind hitherto unknown in the world, had taken an entire poſſeſſion of their minds, and rendered their whole converſation, which otherwiſe would have been pleaſing and inſtructive, perfectly diſguſting. A ſpirit of cabal, intrigue, and proſelytiſm, pervaded all their thoughts, words, and actions. And, as controverſial zeal ſoon turns its thoughts on force, they began to inſinuate themſelves into a correſpondence with foreign princes; in hopes, through their authority, which at firſt they flattered, they might bring about the changes they had in view. To them it was indifferent whether theſe changes were to be accompliſhed by the thunderbolt of

deſpotiſm, or by the earthquake of popular commotion. The correſpondence between this cabal and the late king of Pruſſia, will throw no ſmall light upon the ſpirit of all their proceedings *. For the ſame purpoſe for which they intrigued with princes, they cultivated, in a diſtinguiſhed manner, the monied intereſt of France; and partly through the means furniſhed by thoſe whoſe peculiar offices gave them the moſt extenſive and certain means of communication, they carefully occupied all the avenues to opinion.

Writers, eſpecially when they act in a body, and with one direction, have great influence on the publick mind; the alliance therefore of theſe writers with the monied intereſt †, had no ſmall effect in removing the popular odium and envy which attended that ſpecies of wealth. Theſe writers, like the propagators of all novelties, pretended to a great zeal for the poor, and the lower orders, whilſt in their ſatires they rendered hateful, by every exaggeration, the faults of courts, of nobility, and of prieſthood. They became a ſort of demagogues. They ſerved as a link to unite, in favour of one object, obnoxious wealth to reſtleſs and deſperate poverty.

As theſe two kinds of men appear principal

* I do not chuſe to ſhock the feeling of the moral reader with any quotation of their vulgar, baſe, and profane language.

† Their connection with Turgot and almoſt all the people of the finance.

leaders

leaders in all the late tranſactions, their junction and politicks will ſerve to account, not upon any principles of law or of policy, but as a *cauſe*, for the general fury with which all the landed property of eccleſiaſtical corporations has been attacked; and the great care which, contrary to their pretended principles, has been taken, of a monied intereſt originating from the authority of the crown. All the envy againſt wealth and power, was artificially directed againſt other deſcriptions of riches. On what other principle than that which I have ſtated can we account for an appearance ſo extraordinary and unnatural as that of the eccleſiaſtical poſſeſſions, which had ſtood ſo many ſucceſſions of ages and ſhocks of civil violences, and were guarded at once by juſtice, and by prejudice, being applied to the payment of debts, comparatively recent, invidious, and contracted by a decried and ſubverted government?

Was the publick eſtate a ſufficient ſtake for the publick debts? Aſſume that it was not, and that a loſs *muſt* be incurred ſomewhere—When the only eſtate lawfully poſſeſſed, and which the contracting parties had in contemplation at the time in which their bargain was made, happens to fail, who, according to the principles of natural and legal equity, ought to be the ſufferer? Certainly it ought to be either the party who truſted; or the party who perſuaded him to truſt; or both;

and not third parties who had no concern with the tranſaction. Upon any inſolvency they ought to ſuffer who were weak enough to lend upon bad ſecurity, or they who fraudulently held out a ſecurity that was not valid. Laws are acquainted with no other rules of deciſion. But by the new inſtitute of the rights of men, the only perſons, who in equity ought to ſuffer, are the only perſons who are to be ſaved harmleſs: thoſe are to anſwer the debt who neither were lenders nor borrowers, mortgagers nor mortgagees.

What had the clergy to do with theſe tranſactions? What had they to do with any publick engagement further than the extent of their own debt? To that, to be ſure, their eſtates were bound to the laſt acre. Nothing can lead more to the true ſpirit of the aſſembly, which fits for publick confiſcation, with its new equity, and its new morality, than an attention to their proceeding with regard to this debt of the clergy. The body of confiſcators, true to that monied intereſt for which they were falſe to every other, have found the clergy competent to incur a legal debt. Of courſe they declared them legally entitled to the property which their power of incurring the debt and mortgaging the eſtate implied; recogniſing the rights of thoſe perſecuted citizens, in the very act in which they were thus groſsly violated.

If, as I ſaid, any perſons are to make good deficiencies

ficiencies to the publick creditor, beſides the publick at large, they muſt be thoſe who managed the agreement. Why therefore are not the eſtates of all the comptrollers general confiſcated*? Why not thoſe of the long ſucceſſion of miniſters, financiers, and bankers who have been enriched whilſt the nation was impoveriſhed by their dealings and their counſels? Why is not the eſtate of Mr. Laborde declared forfeited rather than of the archbiſhop of Paris, who has had nothing to do in the creation or in the jobbing of the publick funds? Or, if you muſt confiſcate old landed eſtates in favour of the money-jobbers, why is the penalty confined to one deſcription? I do not know whether the expences of the duke de Choiſeul have left any thing of the infinite ſums which he had derived from the bounty of his maſter, during the tranſactions of a reign which contributed largely, by every ſpecies of prodigality in war and peace, to the preſent debt of France. If any ſuch remains, why is not this confiſcated? I remember to have been in Paris during the time of the old government. I was there juſt after the duke d'Aiguillon had been ſnatched (as it was generally thought) from the block by the hand of a protecting deſpotiſm. He was a miniſter, and had ſome concern in the affairs of that prodigal period. Why do I not ſee his eſtate delivered up to the municipalities in which it is ſituated? The noble

* All have been confiſcated in their turn.

family of Noailles have long been ſervants (meritorious ſervants I admit) to the crown of France, and have had of courſe ſome ſhare in its bounties. Why do I hear nothing of the application of their eſtates to the publick debt? Why is the eſtate of the duke de Rochefoucault more ſacred than that of the cardinal de Rochefoucault? The former is, I doubt not, a worthy perſon; and (if it were not a ſort of profaneneſs to talk of the uſe, as affecting the title to property) he makes a good uſe of his revenues; but it is no diſreſpect to him to ſay, what authentick information well warrants me in ſaying, that the uſe made of a property equally valid, by his brother* the cardinal archbiſhop of Rouen, was far more laudable and far more publick-ſpirited. Can one hear of the proſcription of ſuch perſons, and the confiſcation of their effects, without indignation and horrour? He is not a man who does not feel ſuch emotions on ſuch occaſions. He does not deſerve the name of a free man who will not expreſs them.

Few barbarous conquerors have ever made ſo terrible a revolution in property. None of the heads of the Roman factions, when they eſtabliſhed "*crudelem illam haſtam*" in all their auctions of rapine, have ever ſet up to ſale the goods of the conquered citizen to ſuch an enormous amount. It muſt be allowed in favour of thoſe tyrants of anti-

* Not his brother, nor any near relation; but this miſtake does not affect the argument.

quity,

quity, that what was done by them could hardly be ſaid to be done in cold blood. Their paſſions were inflamed, their tempers ſoured, their underſtandings confuſed, with the ſpirit of revenge, with the innumerable reciprocated and recent inflictions and retaliations of blood and rapine. They were driven beyond all bounds of moderation by the apprehenſion of the return of power with the return of property, to the families of thoſe they had injured beyond all hope of forgiveneſs.

Theſe Roman confiſcators, who were yet only in the elements of tyranny, and were not inſtructed in the rights of men to exerciſe all ſorts of cruelties on each other without provocation, thought it neceſſary to ſpread a ſort of colour over their injuſtice. They conſidered the vanquiſhed party as compoſed of traitors who had borne arms, or otherwiſe had acted with hoſtility againſt the commonwealth. They regarded them as perſons who had forfeited their property by their crimes. With you, in your improved ſtate of the human mind, there was no ſuch formality. You ſeized upon five millions ſterling of annual rent, and turned forty or fifty thouſand human creatures out of their houſes, becauſe "ſuch was your plea-"ſure." The tyrant Harry the eighth of England, as he was not better enlightened than the Roman Marius's and Sylla's, and had not ſtudied in your new ſchools, did not know what an effectual in-

ſtrument of deſpotiſm was to be found in that grand magazine of offenſive weapons, the rights of men. When he reſolved to rob the abbies, as the club of the Jacobins have robbed all the eccleſiaſticks, he began by ſetting on foot a commiſſion to examine into the crimes and abuſes which prevailed in thoſe communities. As it might be expected, his commiſſion reported truths, exaggerations, and falſehoods. But truly or falſely it reported abuſes and offences. However, as abuſes might be corrected, as every crime of perſons does not infer a forfeiture with regard to communities, and as property, in that dark age, was not diſcovered to be a creature of prejudice, all thoſe abuſes (and there were enough of them) were hardly thought ſufficient ground for ſuch a confiſcation as it was for his purpoſes to make. He therefore procured the formal ſurrender of theſe eſtates. All theſe operoſe proceedings were adopted by one of the moſt decided tyrants in the rolls of hiſtory, as neceſſary preliminaries, before he could venture, by bribing the members of his two ſervile houſes with a ſhare of the ſpoil, and holding out to them an eternal immunity from taxation, to demand a confirmation of his iniquitous proceedings by an act of parliament. Had fate reſerved him to our times, four technical terms would have done his buſineſs, and ſaved him all this trouble; he needed nothing more than one ſhort form of incantation—

tion—" *Philoſophy, Light, Liberality, the Rights* " *of Men.*"

I can ſay nothing in praiſe of thoſe acts of tyranny, which no voice has hitherto ever commended under any of their falſe colours; yet in theſe falſe colours an homage was paid by deſpotiſm to juſtice. The power which was above all fear and all remorſe was not ſet above all ſhame. Whilſt ſhame keeps its watch, virtue is not wholly extinguiſhed in the heart; nor will moderation be utterly exiled from the minds of tyrants.

I believe every honeſt man ſympathizes in his reflections with our political poet on that occaſion, and will pray to avert the omen whenever theſe acts of rapacious deſpotiſm preſent themſelves to his view or his imagination:

——— " *May no ſuch ſtorm*
" *Fall on our times, where ruin muſt reform.*
" *Tell me (my muſe) what monſtrous, dire offence,*
" *What crimes could any Chriſtian king incenſe*
" *To ſuch a rage? Was't luxury, or luſt?*
" *Was* he *ſo temperate, ſo chaſte, ſo juſt?*
" *Were theſe their crimes? they were his own much*
" *more,*
" *But wealth is crime enough to him that's poor**."

* The reſt of the paſſage is this——
" Who having ſpent the treaſures of his crown,
" Condemns their luxury to feed his own.
" And yet this act, to varniſh o'er the ſhame
" Of ſacrilege, muſt bear devotion's name.

" No

This ſame wealth, which is at all times treaſon and *leſe nation* to indigent and rapacious deſpo-

" No crime ſo bold, but would be underſtood
" A real, or at leaſt a ſeeming good;
" Who fears not to do ill, yet fears the name,
" And, free from conſcience, is a ſlave to fame.
" Thus he the church at once protects, and ſpoils:
" But princes' ſwords are ſharper than their ſtyles.
" And thus to th' ages paſt he makes amends,
" Their charity deſtroys, their faith defends.
" Then did religion in a lazy cell,
" In empty aëry contemplations dwell;
" And like the block, unmoved lay; but ours,
" As much too active, like the ſtork devours.
" Is there no temp'rate region can be known,
" Betwixt their frigid, and our torrid zone?
" Could we not wake from that lethargick dream,
" But to be reſtleſs in a worſe extreme?
" And for that lethargy was there no cure,
" But to be caſt into a calenture?
" Can knowledge have no bound, but muſt advance
" So far, to make us wiſh for ignorance?
" And rather in the dark to grope our way,
" Than, led by a falſe guide, to err, by day?
" Who ſees theſe diſmal heaps, but would demand,
" What barbarous invader ſack'd the land?
" But when he hears, no Goth, no Turk did bring
" This deſolation, but a Chriſtian king;
" When nothing, but the name of zeal, appears
" 'Twixt our beſt actions, and the worſt of theirs,
" What does he think our ſacrilege would ſpare,
" When ſuch th' effects of our devotion are?"

COOPER'S HILL, by Sir JOHN DENHAM.

tiſm,

tiſm, under all modes of polity, was your temptation to violate property, law, and religion, united in one object. But was the ſtate of France ſo wretched and undone, that no other reſource but rapine remained to preſerve its exiſtence? On this point I wiſh to receive ſome information. When the ſtates met, was the condition of the finances of France ſuch, that, after œconomiſing on principles of juſtice and mercy through all departments, no fair repartition of burthens upon all the orders could poſſibly reſtore them? If ſuch an equal impoſition would have been ſufficient, you well know it might eaſily have been made. Mr. Necker, in the budget which he laid before the orders aſſembled at Verſailles, made a detailed expoſition of the ſtate of the French nation *.

If we give credit to him, it was not neceſſary to have recourſe to any new impoſitions whatſoever, to put the receipts of France on a balance with its expences. He ſtated the permanent charges of all deſcriptions, including the intereſt of a new loan of four hundred millions, at 531,444,000 livres; the fixed revenue at 475,294,000, making the deficiency 56,150,000, or ſhort of 2,200,000 ſterling. But to balance it, he brought forward ſavings and improvements of revenue (conſidered as entirely

* Rapport de Monſ. le Directeur-Général des Finances, fait par ordre du Roi à Verſailles. Mai 5, 1789.

certain)

certain) to rather more than the amount of that deficiency; and he concludes with theſe emphatical words (p. 39) "Quel pays, Meſſieurs, que ce-"lui, où, *ſans impôts* et avec de ſimples objets *in-*"*apperçus*, on peut faire diſparoître un deficit qui "a fait tant de bruit en Europe." As to the reimburſement, the ſinking of debt, and the other great objects of publick credit and political arrangement indicated in Monſieur Necker's ſpeech, no doubt could be entertained, but that a very moderate and proportioned aſſeſſment on the citizens without diſtinction would have provided for all of them to the fulleſt extent of their demand.

If this repreſentation of Monſ. Necker was falſe, then the aſſembly are in the higheſt degree culpable for having forced the king to accept as his miniſter, and ſince the king's depoſition, for having employed as *their* miniſter, a man who had been capable of abuſing ſo notoriouſly the confidence of his maſter and their own; in a matter too of the higheſt moment, and directly appertaining to his particular office. But if the repreſentation was exact (as having always, along with you, conceived a high degree of reſpect for Mr. Necker, I make no doubt it was) then what can be ſaid in favour of thoſe, who, inſtead of moderate, reaſonable, and general contribution, have in cold blood, and impelled

impelled by no neceſſity, had recourſe to a partial and cruel confiſcation?

Was that contribution refuſed on a pretext of privilege, either on the part of the clergy, or on that of the nobility? No certainly. As to the clergy, they even ran before the wiſhes of the third order. Previous to the meeting of the ſtates, they had in all their inſtructions expreſsly directed their deputies to renounce every immunity, which put them upon a footing diſtinct from the condition of their fellow ſubjects. In this renunciation the clergy were even more explicit than the nobility.

But let us ſuppoſe that the deficiency had remained at the 56 millions, (or 2,200,000l. ſterling) as at firſt ſtated by Mr. Necker. Let us allow that all the reſources be oppoſed to that deficiency were impudent and groundleſs fictions; and that the aſſembly (or their lords of articles * at the Jacobins) were from thence juſtified in laying the whole burden of that deficiency on the clergy,—yet allowing all this, a neceſſity of 2,200,000l. ſterling will not ſupport a confiſcation to the amount of five millions. The impoſition of 2,200,000l. on the clergy, as partial, would have

* In the conſtitution of Scotland, during the Stuart reigns, a committee ſat for preparing bills; and none could paſs, but thoſe previouſly approved by them. This committee was called lords of articles.

been

been oppreſſive and unjuſt, but it would not have been altogether ruinous to thoſe on whom it was impoſed; and therefore it would not have anſwered the real purpoſe of the managers.

Perhaps perſons, unacquainted with the ſtate of France, on hearing the clergy and the nobleſſe were privileged in point of taxation, may be led to imagine, that previous to the revolution theſe bodies had contributed nothing to the ſtate. This is a great miſtake. They certainly did not contribute equally with each other, nor either of them equally with the commons. They both however contributed largely. Neither nobility nor clergy enjoyed any exemption from the exciſe on conſumable commodities, from duties of cuſtom, or from any of the other numerous *indirect* impoſitions, which in France, as well as here, make ſo very large a proportion of all payments to the publick. The nobleſſe paid the capitation. They paid alſo a land-tax, called the twentieth penny, to the height ſometimes of three, ſometimes of four ſhillings in the pound; both of them *direct* impoſitions of no light nature, and no trivial produce. The clergy of the provinces annexed by conqueſt to France, (which in extent make about an eighth part of the whole, but in wealth a much larger proportion) paid likewiſe to the capitation and the twentieth penny, at the rate paid by the nobility. The clergy in the old

provinces

provinces did not pay the capitation; but they had redeemed themſelves at the expence of about 24 millions, or a little more than a million ſterling. They were exempted from the twentieths; but then they made free gifts; they contracted debts for the ſtate; and they were ſubject to ſome other charges, the whole computed at about a thirteenth part of their clear income. They ought to have paid annually about forty thouſand pounds more, to put them on a par with the contribution of the nobility.

When the terrours of this tremendous proſcription hung over the clergy, they made an offer of a contribution, through the archbiſhop of Aix, which, for its extravagance, ought not to have been accepted. But it was evidently and obviouſly more advantageous to the publick creditor, than any thing which could rationally be promiſed by the confiſcation. Why was it not accepted? The reaſon is plain—There was no deſire that the church ſhould be brought to ſerve the ſtate. The ſervice of the ſtate was made a pretext to deſtroy the church. In their way to the deſtruction of the church they would not ſcruple to deſtroy their country: and they have deſtroyed it. One great end in the project would have been defeated, if the plan of extortion had been adopted in lieu of the ſcheme of confiſcation. The new landed intereſt connected with the new republick, and connected

with

with it for its very being, could not have been created. This was among the reaſons why that extravagant ranſom was not accepted.

The madneſs of the project of confiſcation, on the plan that was firſt pretended, ſoon became apparent. To bring this unwieldy maſs of landed property, enlarged by the confiſcation of all the vaſt landed domain of the crown, at once into market, was obviouſly to defeat the profits propoſed by the confiſcation, by depreciating the value of thoſe lands, and indeed of all the landed eſtates throughout France. Such a ſudden diverſion of all its circulating money from trade to land, muſt be an additional miſchief. What ſtep was taken? Did the aſſembly, on becoming ſenſible of the inevitable ill effects of their projected ſale, revert to the offers of the clergy? No diſtreſs could oblige them to travel in a courſe which was diſgraced by any appearance of juſtice. Giving over all hopes from a general immediate ſale, another project ſeems to have ſucceeded. They propoſed to take ſtock in exchange for the church lands. In that project great difficulties aroſe in equalizing the objects to be exchanged. Other obſtacles alſo preſented themſelves, which threw them back again upon ſome project of ſale. The municipalities had taken an alarm. They would not hear of transferring the whole plunder of the kingdom to the ſtock-holders in Paris. Many of thoſe

municipalities had been (upon ſyſtem) reduced to the moſt deplorable indigence. Money was no where to be ſeen. They were therefore led to the point that was ſo ardently deſired. They panted for a currency of any kind which might revive their periſhing induſtry. The municipalities were then to be admitted to a ſhare in the ſpoil, which evidently rendered the firſt ſcheme (if ever it had been ſeriouſly entertained) altogether impracticable. Publick exigencies preſſed upon all ſides. The miniſter of finance reiterated his call for ſupply with a moſt urgent, anxious, and boding voice. Thus preſſed on all ſides, inſtead of the firſt plan of converting their bankers into biſhops and abbots, inſtead of paying the old debt, they contracted a new debt, at 3 per cent. creating a new paper currency, founded on an eventual ſale of the church lands. They iſſued this paper currency to ſatisfy in the firſt inſtance chiefly the demands made upon them by the *bank of diſcount*, the great machine, or paper-mill, of their fictitious wealth.

The ſpoil of the church was now become the only reſource of all their operations in finance; the vital principle of all their politicks; the ſole ſecurity for the exiſtence of their power. It was neceſſary by all, even the moſt violent means, to put every individual on the ſame bottom, and to bind the nation in one guilty intereſt to uphold this act, and the authority of thoſe by whom it was

done. In order to force the moſt reluctant into a participation of their pillage, they rendered their paper circulation compulſory in all payments. Thoſe who conſider the general tendency of their ſchemes to this one object as a centre, and a centre from which afterwards all their meaſures radiate, will not think that I dwell too long upon this part of the proceedings of the national aſſembly.

To cut off all appearance of connection between the crown and publick juſtice, and to bring the whole under implicit obedience to the dictators in Paris, the old independent judicature of the parliaments, with all its merits, and all its faults, was wholly aboliſhed. Whilſt the parliaments exiſted, it was evident that the people might ſome time or other come to reſort to them, and rally under the ſtandard of their ancient laws. It became however a matter of conſideration that the magiſtrates and officers, in the courts now aboliſhed, *had purchaſed their places* at a very high rate, for which, as well as for the duty they performed, they received but a very low return of intereſt. Simple confiſcation is a boon only for the clergy;—to the lawyers ſome appearances of equity are to be obſerved; and they are to receive compenſation to an immenſe amount. Their compenſation becomes part of the national debt, for the liquidation of which there is the one exhauſtleſs fund. The lawyers are to obtain their compenſation in

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the new church paper, which is to march with the new principles of judicature and legiſlature. The diſmiſſed magiſtrates are to take their ſhare of martyrdom with the eccleſiaſticks, or to receive their own property from ſuch a fund, and in ſuch a manner, as all thoſe, who have been ſeaſoned with the ancient principles of juriſprudence, and had been the ſworn guardians of property, muſt look upon with horrour. Even the clergy are to receive their miſerable allowance out of the depreciated paper which is ſtamped with the indelible character of ſacrilege, and with the ſymbols of their own ruin, or they muſt ſtarve. So violent an outrage upon credit, property, and liberty, as this compulſory paper currency, has ſeldom been exhibited by the alliance of bankruptcy and tyranny, at any time, or in any nation.

In the courſe of all theſe operations, at length comes out the grand *arcanum;*—that in reality, and in a fair ſenſe, the lands of the church (ſo far as any thing certain can be gathered from their proceedings) are not to be ſold at all. By the late reſolutions of the national aſſembly, they are indeed to be delivered to the higheſt bidder. But it is to be obſerved, that *a certain portion only of the purchaſe money is to be laid down.* A period of twelve years is to be given for the payment of the reſt. The philoſophick purchaſers are therefore, on payment of a ſort of fine, to be put inſtantly

into poſſeſſion of the eſtate. It becomes in ſome reſpects a ſort of gift to them; to be held on the feudal tenure of zeal to the new eſtabliſhment. This project is evidently to let in a body of purchaſers without money. The conſequence will be, that theſe purchaſers, or rather grantees, will pay, not only from the rents as they accrue, which might as well be received by the ſtate, but from the ſpoil of the materials of buildings, from waſte in woods, and from whatever money, by hands habituated to the gripings of uſury, they can wring from the miſerable peaſant. He is to be delivered over to the mercenary and arbitrary diſcretion of men, who will be ſtimulated to every ſpecies of extortion by the growing demands on the growing profits of an eſtate held under the precarious ſettlement of a new political ſyſtem.

When all the frauds, impoſtures, violences, rapines, burnings, murders, confiſcations, compulſory paper currencies, and every deſcription of tyranny and cruelty employed to bring about and to uphold this revolution, have their natural effect, that is, to ſhock the moral ſentiments of all virtuous and ſober minds, the abettors of this philoſophick ſyſtem immediately ſtrain their throats in a declamation againſt the old monarchical government of France. When they have rendered that depoſed power ſufficiently black, they then proceed in argument, as if all thoſe who diſap-

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prove of their new abuſes, muſt of courſe be partiſans of the old; that thoſe who reprobate their crude and violent ſchemes of liberty ought to be treated as advocates for ſervitude. I admit that their neceſſities do compel them to this baſe and contemptible fraud. Nothing can reconcile men to their proceedings and projects but the ſuppoſition that there is no third option between them and ſome tyranny as odious as can be furniſhed by the records of hiſtory, or by the invention of poets. This prattling of theirs hardly deſerves the name of ſophiſtry. It is nothing but plain impudence. Have theſe gentlemen never heard, in the whole circle of the worlds of theory and practice, of any thing between the deſpotiſm of the monarch and the deſpotiſm of the multitude? Have they never heard of a monarchy directed by laws, controlled and balanced by the great hereditary wealth and hereditary dignity of a nation; and both again controlled by a judicious check from the reaſon and feeling of the people at large acting by a ſuitable and permanent organ? Is it then impoſſible that a man may be found who, without criminal ill intention, or pitiable abſurdity, ſhall prefer ſuch a mixed and tempered government to either of the extremes; and who may repute that nation to be deſtitute of all wiſdom and of all virtue, which, having in its choice to obtain ſuch a government with eaſe, *or rather to*

confirm it when actually poſſeſſed, thought proper to commit a thouſand crimes, and to ſubject their country to a thouſand evils, in order to avoid it? Is it then a truth ſo univerſally acknowledged, that a pure democracy is the only tolerable form into which human ſociety can be thrown, that a man is not permitted to heſitate about its merits, without the ſuſpicion of being a friend to tyranny, that is, of being a foe to mankind?

I do not know under what deſcription to claſs the preſent ruling authority in France. It affects to be a pure democracy, though I think it in a direct train of becoming ſhortly a miſchievous and ignoble oligarchy. But for the preſent I admit it to be a contrivance of the nature and effect of what it pretends to. I reprobate no form of government merely upon abſtract principles. There may be ſituations in which the purely democratick form will become neceſſary. There may be ſome (very few, and very particularly circumſtanced) where it would be clearly deſirable. This I do not take to be the caſe of France, or of any other great country. Until now, we have ſeen no examples of conſiderable democracies. The ancients were better acquainted with them. Not being wholly unread in the authors, who had ſeen the moſt of thoſe conſtitutions, and who beſt underſtood them, I cannot help concurring with their opinion, that an abſolute democracy, no more than abſolute

abſolute monarchy, is to be reckoned among the legitimate forms of government. They think it rather the corruption and degeneracy, than the ſound conſtitution of a republick. If I recollect rightly, Ariſtotle obſerves, that a democracy has many ſtriking points of reſemblance with a tyranny *. Of this I am certain, that in a democracy, the majority of the citizens is capable of exerciſing the moſt cruel oppreſſions upon the minority, whenever ſtrong diviſions prevail in that kind of polity, as they often muſt; and that oppreſſion of the minority will extend to far greater numbers, and will be carried on with much greater

* When I wrote this I quoted from memory, after many years had elapſed from my reading the paſſage. A learned friend has found it, and it is as follows:

Τὸ ἦθος τὸ αὐτὸ, καί ἄμφω δεσποτικὰ τῶν βελτιόνων, καὶ τὰ ψηφίσματα, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ τὰ ἐπιταγματα· καὶ ὁ δημαγωγὸς καὶ ὁ κόλαξ, οἱ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀνάλογον· καὶ μάλιστα ἑκάτεροι παρ' ἑκατέροις ἰσχύουσιν, οἱ μὲν κόλακες παρὰ τυράννοις, οἱ δὲ δημαγωγοὶ παρὰ τοῖς δήμοις τοῖς τοιούτοις.—

'The ethical character is the ſame; both exerciſe deſpotiſm 'over the better claſs of citizens; and decrees are in the one, 'what ordinances and arrêts are in the other: the demagogue 'too, and the court favourite, are not unfrequently the ſame 'identical men, and always bear a cloſe analogy; and theſe 'have the principal power, each in their reſpective forms of 'government, favourites with the abſolute monarch, and de-'magogues with a people ſuch as I have deſcribed.' Ariſt. Politic. lib. iv. cap. 4.

fury, than can almoſt ever be apprehended from the dominion of a ſingle ſceptre. In ſuch a popular perſecution, individual ſufferers are in a much more deplorable condition than in any other. Under a cruel prince they have the balmy compaſſion of mankind to aſſuage the ſmart of their wounds; they have the plaudits of the people to animate their generous conſtancy under their ſufferings: but thoſe who are ſubjected to wrong under multitudes, are deprived of all external conſolation. They ſeem deſerted by mankind; overpowered by a conſpiracy of their whole ſpecies.

But admitting democracy not to have that inevitable tendency to party tyranny, which I ſuppoſe it to have, and admitting it to poſſeſs as much good in it when unmixed, as I am ſure it poſſeſſes when compounded with other forms; does monarchy, on its part, contain nothing at all to recommend it? I do not often quote Bolingbroke, nor have his works in general left any permanent impreſſion on my mind. He is a preſumptuous and a ſuperficial writer. But he has one obſervation, which, in my opinion, is not without depth and ſolidity. He ſays, that he prefers a monarchy to other governments; becauſe you can better ingraft any deſcription of republick on a monarchy than any thing of monarchy upon the republican forms. I think him perfectly in the right. The

fact

fact is ſo hiſtorically; and it agrees well with the ſpeculation.

I know how eaſy a topick it is to dwell on the faults of departed greatneſs. By a revolution in the ſtate, the fawning ſycophant of yeſterday is converted into the auſtere critick of the preſent hour. But ſteady independent minds, when they have an object of ſo ſerious a concern to mankind as government, under their contemplation, will diſdain to aſſume the part of ſatiriſts and declaimers. They will judge of human inſtitutions as they do of human characters. They will ſort out the good from the evil, which is mixed in mortal inſtitutions as it is in mortal men.

Your government in France, though uſually, and I think juſtly, reputed the beſt of the unqualified or ill-qualified monarchies, was ſtill full of abuſes. Theſe abuſes accumulated in a length of time, as they muſt accumulate in every monarchy not under the conſtant inſpection of a popular repreſentative. I am no ſtranger to the faults and defects of the ſubverted government of France; and I think I am not inclined by nature or policy to make a panegyrick upon any thing which is a juſt and natural object of cenſure. But the queſtion is not now of the vices of that monarchy, but of its exiſtence. Is it then true, that the French government was ſuch as to be incapable or undeſerving of reform; ſo that it was of abſolute neceſſity

ceſſity the whole fabrick ſhould be at once pulled down, and the area cleared for the erection of a theoretick experimental edifice in its place? All France was of a different opinion in the beginning of the year 1789. The inſtructions to the repreſentatives to the ſtates-general, from every diſtrict in that kingdom, were filled with projects for the reformation of that government, without the remoteſt ſuggeſtion of a deſign to deſtroy it. Had ſuch a deſign been then even inſinuated, I believe there would have been but one voice, and that voice for rejecting it with ſcorn and horrour. Men have been ſometimes led by degrees, ſometimes hurried, into things of which, if they could have ſeen the whole together, they never would have permitted the moſt remote approach. When thoſe inſtructions were given, there was no queſtion but that abuſes exiſted, and that they demanded a reform; nor is there now. In the interval between the inſtructions and the revolution, things changed their ſhape; and in conſequence of that change, the true queſtion at preſent is, Whether thoſe who would have reformed, or thoſe who have deſtroyed, are in the right?

To hear ſome men ſpeak of the late monarchy of France, you would imagine that they were talking of Perſia bleeding under the ferocious ſword of Tahmas Kouli Khân; or at leaſt deſcribing the barbarous anarchick deſpotiſm of Turkey, where the

the fineſt countries in the moſt genial climates in the world are waſted by peace more than any countries have been worried by war; where arts are unknown, where manufactures languiſh, where ſcience is extinguiſhed, where agriculture decays, where the human race itſelf melts away and periſhes under the eye of the obſerver. Was this the caſe of France? I have no way of determining the queſtion but by a reference to facts. Facts do not ſupport this reſemblance. Along with much evil, there is ſome good in monarchy itſelf; and ſome corrective to its evil from religion, from laws, from manners, from opinions, the French monarchy muſt have received; which rendered it (though by no means a free, and therefore by no means a good conſtitution) a deſpotiſm rather in appearance than in reality.

Among the ſtandards upon which the effects of government on any country are to be eſtimated, I muſt conſider the ſtate of its population as not the leaſt certain. No country in which population flouriſhes, and is in progreſſive improvement, can be under a *very* miſchievous government. About ſixty years ago, the Intendants of the generalities of France made with other matters, a report of the population of their ſeveral diſtricts. I have not the books, which are very voluminous, by me, nor do I know where to procure them (I am obliged to ſpeak by memory, and therefore the

the leſs poſitively) but I think the population of France was by them, even at that period, eſtimated at twenty-two millions of ſouls. At the end of the laſt century it had been generally calculated at eighteen. On either of theſe eſtimations France was not ill peopled. Mr. Necker, who is an authority for his own time at leaſt equal to the Intendants for theirs, reckons, and upon apparently ſure principles, the people of France, in the year 1780, at twenty-four millions ſix hundred and ſeventy thouſand. But was this the probable ultimate term under the old eſtabliſhment? Dr. Price is of opinion, that the growth of population in France was by no means at its *acmé* in that year. I certainly defer to Dr. Price's authority a good deal more in theſe ſpeculations, than I do in his general politicks. This gentleman, taking ground on Mr. Necker's data, is very confident that ſince the period of that miniſter's calculation, the French population has increaſed rapidly; ſo rapidly, that in the year 1789 he will not conſent to rate the people of that kingdom at a lower number than thirty millions. After abating much (and much I think ought to be abated) from the ſanguine calculation of Dr. Price, I have no doubt that the population of France did increaſe conſiderably during this latter period: but ſuppoſing that it increaſed to nothing more than will be ſufficient to complete the twenty-four millions ſix hundred

hundred and ſeventy thouſand to twenty-five millions, ſtill a population of twenty-five millions, and that in an increaſing progreſs, on a ſpace of about twenty-ſeven thouſand ſquare leagues, is immenſe. It is, for inſtance, a good deal more than the proportionable population of this iſland, or even than that of England, the beſt peopled part of the united kingdom.

It is not univerſally true, that France is a fertile country. Conſiderable tracts of it are barren, and labour under other natural diſadvantages. In the portions of that territory, where things are more favourable, as far as I am able to diſcover, the numbers of the people correſpond to the indulgence of nature *. The Generality of Liſle (this I admit is the ſtrongeſt example) upon an extent of four hundred and four leagues and a half, about ten years ago, contained ſeven hundred and thirty-four thouſand ſix hundred ſouls, which is one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventy-two inhabitants to each ſquare league. The middle term for the reſt of France is about nine hundred inhabitants to the ſame admeaſurement.

I do not attribute this population to the depoſed government; becauſe I do not like to compliment the contrivances of men with what is due in a great degree to the bounty of Providence.

* De l'Adminiſtration des Finances de la France, par Monſ. Necker, vol. i, p. 288.

But

But that decried government could not have obſtructed, moſt probably it favoured, the operation of thoſe cauſes (whatever they were) whether of nature in the ſoil, or habits of induſtry among the people, which has produced ſo large a number of the ſpecies throughout that whole kingdom, and exhibited in ſome particular places ſuch prodigies of population. I never will ſuppoſe that fabrick of a ſtate to be the worſt of all political inſtitutions, which, by experience, is found to contain a principle favourable (however latent it may be) to the increaſe of mankind.

The wealth of a country is another, and no contemptible ſtandard, by which we may judge whether, on the whole, a government be protecting or deſtructive. France far exceeds England in the multitude of her people; but I apprehend that her comparative wealth is much inferiour to ours; that it is not ſo equal in the diſtribution, nor ſo ready in the circulation. I believe the difference in the form of the two governments to be amongſt the cauſes of this advantage on the ſide of England. I ſpeak of England, not of the whole Britiſh dominions; which, if compared with thoſe of France, will, in ſome degree, weaken the comparative rate of wealth upon our ſide. But that wealth, which will not endure a compariſon with the riches of England, may conſtitute a very reſpectable degree of opulence. Mr. Necker's book,

publiſhed in 1785 *, contains an accurate and intereſting collection of facts relative to publick œconomy and to political arithmetick; and his ſpeculations on the ſubject are in general wiſe and liberal. In that work he gives an idea of the ſtate of France, very remote from the portrait of a country whoſe government was a perfect grievance, an abſolute evil, admitting no cure but through the violent and uncertain remedy of a total revolution. He affirms, that from the year 1726 to the year 1784, there was coined at the mint of France, in the ſpecies of gold and ſilver, to the amount of about one hundred millions of pounds ſterling †.

It is impoſſible that Mr. Necker ſhould be miſtaken in the amount of the bullion which has been coined in the mint. It is a matter of official record. The reaſonings of this able financier, concerning the quantity of gold and ſilver which remained for circulation, when he wrote in 1785, that is, about four years before the depoſition and impriſonment of the French king, are not of equal certainty; but they are laid on grounds ſo apparently ſolid, that it is not eaſy to refuſe a conſiderable degree of aſſent to his calculation. He

* De l'Adminiſtration des Finances de la France, par Monſ. Necker.

† Vol. iii. chap. 8. and chap. 9.

calculates

calculates the *numeraire*, or what we call *ſpecie*, then actually exiſting in France, at about eighty-eight millions of the ſame Engliſh money. A great accumulation of wealth for one country, large as that country is! Mr. Necker was ſo far from conſidering this influx of wealth as likely to ceaſe, when he wrote in 1785, that he preſumes upon a future annual increaſe of two per cent. upon the money brought into France during the periods from which he computed.

Some adequate cauſe muſt have originally introduced all the money coined at its mint into that kingdom; and ſome cauſe as operative muſt have kept at home, or returned into its boſom, ſuch a vaſt flood of treaſure as Mr. Necker calculates to remain for domeſtick circulation. Suppoſe any reaſonable deductions from Mr. Necker's computation; the remainder muſt ſtill amount to an immenſe ſum. Cauſes thus powerful to acquire and to retain, cannot be found in diſcouraged induſtry, inſecure property, and a poſitively deſtructive government. Indeed, when I conſider the face of the kingdom of France; the multitude and opulence of her cities; the uſeful magnificence of her ſpacious high roads and bridges; the opportunity of her artificial canals and navigations opening the conveniences of maritime communication through a ſolid continent of ſo immenſe an extent; when I

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turn my eyes to the ſtupendous works of her ports and harbours, and to her whole naval apparatus, whether for war or trade; when I bring before my view the number of her fortifications, conſtructed with ſo bold and maſterly a ſkill, and made and maintained at ſo prodigious a charge, preſenting an armed front and impenetrable barrier to her enemies upon every ſide; when I recollect how very ſmall a part of that extenſive region is without cultivation, and to what complete perfection the culture of many of the beſt productions of the earth have been brought in France; when I reflect on the excellence of her manufactures and fabricks, ſecond to none but ours, and in ſome particulars not ſecond; when I contemplate the grand foundations of charity, publick and private; when I ſurvey the ſtate of all the arts that beautify and poliſh life; when I reckon the men ſhe has bred for extending her fame in war, her able ſtateſmen, the multitude of her profound lawyers and theologians, her philoſophers, her criticks, her hiſtorians and antiquaries, her poets and her orators, ſacred and profane; I behold in all this ſomething which awes and commands the imagination, which checks the mind on the brink of precipitate and indiſcriminate cenſure, and which demands, that we ſhould very ſeriouſly examine, what and how great are the latent vices that could authorize us at once to level

ſo ſpecious a fabrick with the ground. I do not recogniſe, in this view of things, the deſpotiſm of Turkey. Nor do I diſcern the character of a government, that has been, on the whole, ſo oppreſſive, or ſo corrupt, or ſo negligent, as to be utterly unfit *for all reformation.* I muſt think ſuch a government well deſerved to have its excellencies heightened; its faults corrected; and its capacities improved into a Britiſh conſtitution.

Whoever has examined into the proceedings of that depoſed government for ſeveral years back, cannot fail to have obſerved, amidſt the inconſtancy and fluctuation natural to courts, an earneſt endeavour towards the proſperity and improvement of the country; he muſt admit, that it had long been employed, in ſome inſtances, wholly to remove, in many conſiderably to correct, the abuſive practices and uſages that had prevailed in the ſtate; and that even the unlimited power of the ſovereign over the perſons of his ſubjects, inconſiſtent, as undoubtedly it was, with law and liberty, had yet been every day growing more mitigated in the exerciſe. So far from refuſing itſelf to reformation, that government was open, with a cenſurable degree of facility, to all ſorts of projects and projectors on the ſubject. Rather too much countenance was given to the ſpirit of innovation, which ſoon was turned againſt thoſe who foſtered it, and ended in their ruin. It is but

cold,

cold, and no very flattering juſtice to that fallen monarchy, to ſay, that, for many years, it treſpaſſed more by levity and want of judgment in ſeveral of its ſchemes, than from any defect in diligence or in publick ſpirit. To compare the government of France for the laſt fifteen or ſixteen years with wiſe and well-conſtituted eſtabliſhments during that, or during any period, is not to act with fairneſs. But if in point of prodigality in the expenditure of money, or in point of rigour in the exerciſe of power, it be compared with any of the former reigns, I believe candid judges will give little credit to the good intentions of thoſe who dwell perpetually on the donations to favourites, or on the expences of the court, or on the horrours of the Baſtile in the reign of Louis the Sixteenth *.

Whether the ſyſtem, if it deſerves ſuch a name, now built on the ruins of that ancient monarchy, will be able to give a better account of the population and wealth of the country, which it has taken under its care, is a matter very doubtful. Inſtead of improving by the change, I apprehend that a long ſeries of years muſt be told, before it

* The world is obliged to Mr. de Calonne for the pains he has taken to refute the ſcandalous exaggerations relative to ſome of the royal expences, and to detect the fallacious account given of penſions, for the wicked purpoſe of provoking the populace to all ſorts of crimes.

can recover in any degree the effects of this philoſophick revolution, and before the nation can be replaced on its former footing. If Dr. Price ſhould think fit, a few years hence, to favour us with an eſtimate of the population of France, he will hardly be able to make up his tale of thirty millions of ſouls, as computed in 1789, or the aſſembly's computation of twenty-ſix millions of that year; or even Mr. Necker's twenty-five millions in 1780. I hear that there are conſiderable emigrations from France; and that many quitting that voluptuous climate, and that ſeductive *Circean* liberty, have taken refuge in the frozen regions, and under the Britiſh deſpotiſm of Canada.

In the preſent diſappearance of coin, no perſon could think it the ſame country, in which the preſent miniſter of the finances has been able to diſcover fourſcore millions ſterling in ſpecie. From its general aſpect one would conclude that it had been for ſome time paſt under the ſpecial direction of the learned academicians of Laputa and Balnibarbi*. Already the population of Paris has ſo declined, that Mr. Necker ſtated to the national aſſembly the proviſion to be made for its ſubſiſtence at a fifth leſs than what had formerly been found

* See Gulliver's Travels for the idea of countries governed by philoſophers.

requiſite.

requiſite *. It is ſaid (and I have never heard it contradicted) that a hundred thouſand people are out of employment in that city, though it is become the ſeat of the impriſoned court and national aſſembly. Nothing, I am credibly informed, can exceed the ſhocking and diſguſting ſpectacle of mendicancy diſplayed in that capital. Indeed the votes of the national aſſembly leave no doubt of the fact. They have lately appointed a ſtanding committee of mendicancy. They are contriving at once a vigorous police on this ſubject, and, for the firſt time, the impoſition of a tax to maintain the poor, for whoſe preſent relief great ſums appear on the face of the publick accounts of the year †. In the mean time the leaders of the legiſlative

* Mr. de Calonne ſtates the falling off of the population of Paris as far more conſiderable; and it may be ſo, ſince the period of Mr. Necker's calculation.

† Travaux de charité pour ſubvenir au manque de travail à

	Livres.	£.	s.	d.
Paris et dans les provinces	3,866,920 —	161,121	13	4
Deſtruction de vagabondage et de la mendicité - -	1,671,417 —	69,642	7	6
Primes pour l'importation de grains - - - -	5,671,907 —	236,329	9	2
Dépenſes relatives aux ſubſiſtances, déduction fait des récouvrements qui ont eu lieu	39,871,790—1,661,324		11	8
Total,	51,082,034—2,128,418		1	8

lative clubs and coffee-houſes are intoxicated with admiration at their own wiſdom and ability. They ſpeak with the moſt ſovereign contempt of the reſt of the world. They tell the people, to comfort them in the rags with which they have clothed them, that they are a nation of philoſophers; and, ſometimes, by all the arts of quackiſh parade, by ſhew, tumult, and buſtle, ſometimes by the alarms of plots and invaſions, they attempt to drown the cries of indigence, and to divert the eyes of the obſerver from the ruin and wretchedneſs of the ſtate. A brave people will certainly prefer liberty, accompanied with a virtuous poverty, to a depraved and wealthy ſervitude. But before the price of comfort and opulence is paid,

When I ſent this book to the preſs, I entertained ſome doubt concerning the nature and extent of the laſt article in the above accounts, which is only under a general head, without any detail. Since then I have ſeen Mr. de Calonne's work. I muſt think it a great loſs to me that I had not that advantage earlier. Mr. de Calonne thinks this article to be on account of general ſubſiſtence; but as he is not able to comprehend how ſo great a loſs as upwards of £.1,661,000 ſterling could be ſuſtained on the difference between the price and the ſale of grain, he ſeems to attribute this enormous head of charge to ſecret expences of the revolution. I cannot ſay any thing poſitively on that ſubject. The reader is capable of judging, by the aggregate of theſe immenſe charges, on the ſtate and condition of France; and the ſyſtem of publick œconomy adopted in that nation. Theſe articles of account produced no inquiry or diſcuſſion in the national aſſembly.

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one ought to be pretty ſure it is real liberty which is purchaſed, and that ſhe is to be purchaſed at no other price. I ſhall always, however, conſider that liberty as very equivocal in her appearance, which has not wiſdom and juſtice for her companions; and does not lead proſperity and plenty in her train.

The advocates for this revolution, not ſatisfied with exaggerating the vices of their ancient government, ſtrike at the fame of their country itſelf, by painting almoſt all that could have attracted the attention of ſtrangers, I mean their nobility and their clergy, as objects of horrour. If this were only a libel, there had not been much in it. But it has practical conſequences. Had your nobility and gentry, who formed the great body of your landed men, and the whole of your military officers, reſembled thoſe of Germany, at the period when the Hanſe-towns were neceſſitated to confederate againſt the nobles in defence of their property—had they been like the *Orſini* and *Vitelli* in Italy, who uſed to ſally from their fortified dens to rob the trader and traveller—had they been ſuch as the *Mamelukes* in Egypt, or the *Nayres* on the coaſt of Malabar, I do admit, that too critical an inquiry might not be adviſeable into the means of freeing the world from ſuch a nuiſance. The ſtatues of Equity and Mercy might be veiled for a moment. The tendereſt minds, confounded with

the dreadful exigence in which morality ſubmits to the ſuſpenſion of its own rules in favour of its own principles, might turn aſide whilſt fraud and violence were accompliſhing the deſtruction of a pretended nobility which diſgraced, whilſt it perſecuted, human nature. The perſons moſt abhorrent from blood, and treaſon, and arbitrary confiſcation, might remain ſilent ſpectators of this civil war between the vices.

But did the privileged nobility who met under the king's precept at Verſailles, in 1789, or their conſtituents, deſerve to be looked on as the *Nayres* or *Mamelukes* of this age, or as the *Orſini* and *Vitelli* of ancient times? If I had then aſked the queſtion I ſhould have paſſed for a madman. What have they ſince done that they were to be driven into exile, that their perſons ſhould be hunted about, mangled, and tortured, their families diſperſed, their houſes laid in aſhes, and that their order ſhould be aboliſhed, and the memory of it, if poſſible, extinguiſhed, by ordaining them to change the very names by which they were uſually known? Read their inſtructions to their repreſentatives. They breathe the ſpirit of liberty as warmly, and they recommend reformation as ſtrongly, as any other order. Their privileges relative to contribution were voluntarily ſurrendered; as the king, from the beginning, ſurrendered all pretence to a right of taxation. Upon a free

free conſtitution there was but one opinion in France. The abſolute monarchy was at an end. It breathed its laſt, without a groan, without ſtruggle, without convulſion. All the ſtruggle, all the diſſenſion aroſe afterwards upon the preference of a deſpotick democracy to a government of reciprocal control. The triumph of the victorious party was over the principles of a Britiſh conſtitution.

I have obſerved the affectation, which, for many years paſt, has prevailed in Paris even to a degree perfectly childiſh, of idolizing the memory of your Henry the Fourth. If any thing could put one out of humour with that ornament to the kingly character, it would be this overdone ſtyle of inſidious panegyrick. The perſons who have worked this engine the moſt buſily, are thoſe who have ended their panegyricks in dethroning his ſucceſſor and deſcendant; a man, as good-natured at the leaſt, as Henry the Fourth; altogether as fond of his people; and who has done infinitely more to correct the ancient vices of the ſtate than that great monarch did, or we are ſure he ever meant to do. Well it is for his panegyriſts that they have not him to deal with. For Henry of Navarre was a reſolute, active, and politick prince. He poſſeſſed indeed great humanity and mildneſs; but an humanity and mildneſs that never ſtood in the way of his intereſts. He never ſought to be loved without putting himſelf firſt in a condition

to

to be feared. He uſed ſoft language with determined conduct. He aſſerted and maintained his authority in the groſs, and diſtributed his acts of conceſſion only in the detail. He ſpent the income of his prerogative nobly; but he took care not to break in upon the capital; never abandoning for a moment any of the claims, which he made under the fundamental laws, nor ſparing to ſhed the blood of thoſe who oppoſed him, often in the field, ſometimes upon the ſcaffold. Becauſe he knew how to make his virtues reſpected, by the ungrateful, he has merited the praiſes of thoſe whom, if they had lived in his time, he would have ſhut up in the Baſtile, and brought to puniſhment along with the regicides whom he hanged after he had famiſhed Paris into a ſurrender.

If theſe panegyriſts are in earneſt in their admiration of Henry the Fourth, they muſt remember, that they cannot think more highly of him, than he did of the nobleſſe of France; whoſe virtue, honour, courage, patriotiſm, and loyalty were his conſtant theme.

But the nobility of France are degenerated ſince the days of Henry the Fourth. This is poſſible. But it is more than I can believe to be true in any great degree. I do not pretend to know France as correctly as ſome others; but I have endeavoured through my whole life to make myſelf acquainted with human nature: otherwiſe I ſhould be

be unfit to take even my humble part in the ſervice of mankind. In that ſtudy I could not paſs by a vaſt portion of our nature, as it appeared modified in a country but twenty-four miles from the ſhore of this iſland. On my beſt obſervation, compared with my beſt inquiries, I found your nobility for the greater part compoſed of men of a high ſpirit, and of a delicate ſenſe of honour, both with regard to themſelves individually, and with regard to their whole corps, over whom they kept, beyond what is common in other countries, a cenſorial eye. They were tolerably well-bred; very officious, humane, and hoſpitable; in their converſation frank and open; with a good military tone; and reaſonably tinctured with literature, particularly of the authors in their own language. Many had pretenſions far above this deſcription. I ſpeak of thoſe who were generally met with.

As to their behaviour to the inferiour claſſes, they appeared to me to comport themſelves towards them with good-nature, and with ſomething more nearly approaching to familiarity, than is generally practiſed with us in the intercourſe between the higher and lower ranks of life. To ſtrike any perſon, even in the moſt abject condition, was a thing in a manner unknown, and would be highly diſgraceful. Inſtances of other ill-treatment of the humble part of the community were rare; and as to attacks made upon the property

property or the perſonal liberty of the commons, I never heard of any whatſoever from *them*; nor, whilſt the laws were in vigour under the ancient government, would ſuch tyranny in ſubjects have been permitted. As men of landed eſtates, I had no fault to find with their conduct, though much to reprehend, and much to wiſh changed, in many of the old tenures. Where the letting of their land was by rent, I could not diſcover that their agreements with their farmers were oppreſſive; nor when they were in partnerſhip with the farmer, as often was the caſe, have I heard that they had taken the lion's ſhare. The proportions ſeemed not inequitable. There might be exceptions; but certainly they were exceptions only. I have no reaſon to believe that in theſe reſpects the landed nobleſſe of France were worſe than the landed gentry of this country; certainly in no reſpect more vexatious than the landholders, not noble, of their own nation. In cities the nobility had no manner of power; in the country very little. You know, Sir, that much of the civil government, and the police in the moſt eſſential parts, was not in the hands of that nobility which preſents itſelf firſt to our conſideration. The revenue, the ſyſtem and collection of which were the moſt grievous parts of the French government, was not adminiſtered by the men of the ſword; nor were they anſwerable for the vices of

of its principle, or the vexations, where any ſuch exiſted, in its management.

Denying, as I am well warranted to do, that the nobility had any conſiderable ſhare in the oppreſſion of the people, in caſes in which real oppreſſion exiſted, I am ready to admit that they were not without conſiderable faults and errours. A fooliſh imitation of the worſt part of the manners of England, which impaired their natural character, without ſubſtituting in its place what perhaps they meant to copy, has certainly rendered them worſe than formerly they were. Habitual diſſoluteneſs of manners continued beyond the pardonable period of life, was more common amongſt them than it is with us; and it reigned with the leſs hope of remedy, though poſſibly with ſomething of leſs miſchief, by being covered with more exterior decorum. They countenanced too much that licentious philoſophy which has helped to bring on their ruin. There was another errour amongſt them more fatal. Thoſe of the commons, who approached to or exceeded many of the nobility in point of wealth, were not fully admitted to the rank and eſtimation which wealth, in reaſon and good policy, ought to beſtow in every country; though I think not equally with that of other nobility. The two kinds of ariſtocracy were too punctilioufly kept aſunder; leſs ſo, however, than in Germany and ſome other nations.

This

This ſeparation, as I have already taken the liberty of ſuggeſting to you, I conceive to be one principal cauſe of the deſtruction of the old nobility. The military, particularly, was too excluſively reſerved for men of family. But, after all, this was an errour of opinion, which a conflicting opinion would have rectified. A permanent aſſembly, in which the commons had their ſhare of power, would ſoon aboliſh whatever was too invidious and inſulting in theſe diſtinctions; and even the faults in the morals of the nobility would have been probably corrected, by the greater varieties of occupation and purſuit to which a conſtitution by orders would have given riſe.

All this violent cry againſt the nobility I take to be a mere work of art. To be honoured and even privileged by the laws, opinions, and inveterate uſages of our country, growing out of the prejudice of ages, has nothing to provoke horrour and indignation in any man. Even to be too tenacious of thoſe privileges is not abſolutely a crime. The ſtrong ſtruggle in every individual to preſerve poſſeſſion of what he has found to belong to him, and to diſtinguiſh him, is one of the ſecurities againſt injuſtice and deſpotiſm implanted in our nature. It operates as an inſtinct to ſecure property, and to preſerve communities in a ſettled ſtate. What is there to ſhock in this? Nobility is a graceful ornament to the civil order. It is the Corinthian

Corinthian capital of poliſhed ſociety. *Omnes boni nobilitati ſemper favemus*, was the ſaying of a wiſe and good man. It is indeed one ſign of a liberal and benevolent mind to incline to it with ſome ſort of partial propenſity. He feels no ennobling principle in his own heart, who wiſhes to level all the artificial inſtitutions which have been adopted for giving a body to opinion, and permanence to fugitive eſteem. It is a ſour, malignant, envious diſpoſition, without taſte for the reality, or for any image or repreſentation of virtue, that ſees with joy the unmerited fall of what had long flouriſhed in ſplendour and in honour. I do not like to ſee any thing deſtroyed; any void produced in ſociety; any ruin on the face of the land. It was therefore with no diſappointment or diſſatisfaction that my inquiries and obſervations did not preſent to me any incorrigible vices in the nobleſſe of France, or any abuſe which could not be removed by a reform very ſhort of abolition. Your nobleſſe did not deſerve puniſhment; but to degrade is to puniſh.

It was with the ſame ſatisfaction I found that the reſult of my inquiry concerning your clergy was not diſſimilar. It is no ſoothing news to my ears, that great bodies of men are incurably corrupt. It is not with much credulity I liſten to any, when they ſpeak evil of thoſe whom they are going to plunder. I rather ſuſpect that vices are feigned

feigned or exaggerated, when profit is looked for in their puniſhment. An enemy is a bad witneſs: a robber is a worſe. Vices and abuſes there were undoubtedly in that order, and muſt be. It was an old eſtabliſhment, and not frequently reviſed. But I ſaw no crimes in the individuals that merited confiſcation of their ſubſtance, nor thoſe cruel inſults and degradations, and that unnatural perſecution which have been ſubſtituted in the place of meliorating regulation.

If there had been any juſt cauſe for this new religious perſecution, the atheiſtick libellers, who act as trumpeters to animate the populace to plunder, do not love any body ſo much as not to dwell with complacence on the vices of the exiſting clergy. This they have not done. They find themſelves obliged to rake into the hiſtories of former ages (which they have ranſacked with a malignant and profligate induſtry) for every inſtance of oppreſſion and perſecution which has been made by that body or in its favour, in order to juſtify, upon very iniquitous, becauſe very illogical principles of retaliation, their own perſecutions, and their own cruelties. After deſtroying all other genealogies and family diſtinctions, they invent a ſort of pedigree of crimes. It is not very juſt to chaſtiſe men for the offences of their natural anceſtors; but to take the fiction of anceſtry in a corporate ſucceſſion, as a ground for puniſhing men

men who have no relation to guilty acts, except in names and general deſcriptions, is a ſort of refinement in injuſtice belonging to the philoſophy of this enlightened age. The aſſembly puniſhes men, many, if not moſt, of whom abhor the violent conduct of eccleſiaſticks in former times as much as their preſent perſecutors can do, and who would be as loud and as ſtrong in the expreſſion of that ſenſe, if they were not well aware of the purpoſes for which all this declamation is employed.

Corporate bodies are immortal for the good of the members, but not for their puniſhment. Nations themſelves are ſuch corporations. As well might we in England think of waging inexpiable war upon all Frenchmen for the evils which they have brought upon us in the ſeveral periods of our mutual hoſtilities. You might, on your part, think yourſelves juſtified in falling upon all Engliſhmen on account of the unparalleled calamities brought upon the people of France by the unjuſt invaſions of our Henries and our Edwards. Indeed we ſhould be mutually juſtified in this exterminatory war upon each other, full as much as you are in the unprovoked perſecution of your preſent countrymen, on account of the conduct of men of the ſame name in other times.

We do not draw the moral leſſons we might from hiſtory. On the contrary, without care it may be uſed to vitiate our minds and to deſtroy

our happineſs. In hiſtory a great volume is unrolled for our inſtruction, drawing the materials of future wiſdom from the paſt errours and infirmities of mankind. It may, in the perverſion, ſerve for a magazine, furniſhing offenſive and defenſive weapons for parties in church and ſtate, and ſupplying the means of keeping alive, or reviving diſſenſions and animoſities, and adding fuel to civil fury. Hiſtory conſiſts, for the greater part, of the miſeries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, luſt, ſedition, hypocriſy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of diſorderly appetites, which ſhake the publick with the ſame

——" *troublous ſtorms that toſs*
" *The private ſtate, and render life unſweet.*"

Theſe vices are the *cauſes* of thoſe ſtorms. Religion, morals, laws, prerogatives, privileges, liberties, rights of men, are the *pretexts.* The pretexts are always found in ſome ſpecious appearance of a real good. You would not ſecure men from tyranny and ſedition, by rooting out of the mind the principles to which theſe fraudulent pretexts apply? If you did, you would root out every thing that is valuable in the human breaſt. As theſe are the pretexts, ſo the ordinary actors and inſtruments in great publick evils are kings, prieſts, magiſtrates, ſenates, parliaments, national aſſemblies, judges,

judges, and captains. You would not cure the evil by reſolving, that there ſhould be no more monarchs, nor miniſters of ſtate, nor of the goſpel; no interpreters of law; no general officers; no publick councils. You might change the names. The things in ſome ſhape muſt remain. A certain *quantum* of power muſt always exiſt in the community, in ſome hands, and under ſome appellation. Wiſe men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names; to the cauſes of evil which are permanent, not to the occaſional organs by which they act, and the tranſitory modes in which they appear. Otherwiſe you will be wiſe hiſtorically, a fool in practice. Seldom have two ages the ſame faſhion in their pretexts and the ſame modes of miſchief. Wickedneſs is a little more inventive. Whilſt you are diſcuſſing faſhion, the faſhion is gone by. The very ſame vice aſſumes a new body. The ſpirit tranſmigrates; and, far from loſing its principle of life by the change of its appearance, it is renovated in its new organs with the freſh vigour of a juvenile activity. It walks abroad; it continues its ravages; whilſt you are gibbeting the carcaſe, or demoliſhing the tomb. You are terrifying yourſelves with ghoſts and apparitions, whilſt your houſe is the haunt of robbers. It is thus with all thoſe, who, attending only to the ſhell and huſk of hiſtory, think they are waging war with intolerance, pride, and cruelty, whilſt, under colour,

of abhorring the ill principles of antiquated parties, they are authorizing and feeding the ſame odious vices in different factions, and perhaps in worſe.

Your citizens of Paris formerly had lent themſelves as the ready inſtruments to ſlaughter the followers of Calvin, at the infamous maſſacre of St. Bartholomew. What ſhould we ſay to thoſe who could think of retaliating on the Pariſians of this day the abominations and horrours of that time? They are indeed brought to abhor *that* maſſacre. Ferocious as they are, it is not difficult to make them diſlike it; becauſe the politicians and faſhionable teachers have no intereſt in giving their paſſions exactly the ſame direction. Still however they find it their intereſt to keep the ſame ſavage diſpoſitions alive. It was but the other day that they cauſed this very maſſacre to be acted on the ſtage for the diverſion of the deſcendants of thoſe who committed it. In this tragick farce they produced the cardinal of Lorraine in his robes of function, ordering general ſlaughter. Was this ſpectacle intended to make the Pariſians abhor perſecution, and loath the effuſion of blood?—*No; it* was to teach them to perſecute *their own paſtors;* it was to excite them, by raiſing a *diſguſt and horrour* of their clergy, to an alacrity in hunting down to deſtruction an order, which, if it ought to exiſt at all, ought to exiſt not only in ſafety, but in reverence.

verence. It was to ſtimulate their cannibal appetites (which one would think had been gorged ſufficiently) by variety and ſeaſoning; and to quicken them to an alertneſs in new murders and maſſacres, if it ſhould ſuit the purpoſe of the Guiſes of the day. An aſſembly, in which ſat a multitude of prieſts and prelates, was obliged to ſuffer this indignity at its door. The author was not ſent to the gallies, nor the players to the houſe of correction. Not long after this exhibition, thoſe players came forward to the aſſembly to claim the rites of that very religion which they had dared to expoſe, and to ſhew their proſtituted faces in the ſenate, whilſt the archbiſhop of Paris, whoſe function was known to his people only by his prayers and benedictions, and his wealth only by alms, is forced to abandon his houſe, and to fly from his flock (as from ravenous wolves) becauſe, truly, in the ſixteenth century, the cardinal of Lorraine was a rebel and a murderer *.

Such is the effect of the perverſion of hiſtory, by thoſe, who, for the ſame nefarious purpoſes, have perverted every other part of learning. But thoſe who will ſtand upon that elevation of reaſon, which places centuries under our eye, and brings things to the true point of compariſon, which obſcures little names, and effaces the colours of little

* This is on a ſuppoſition of the truth of this ſtory; but he was not in France at the time. One name ſerves as well as another.

parties, and to which nothing can aſcend but the ſpirit and moral quality of human actions, will ſay, to the teachers of the Palais Royal,—the cardinal of Lorraine was the murderer of the ſixteenth century, you have the glory of being the murderers in the eighteenth; and this is the only difference between you. But hiſtory, in the nineteenth century, better underſtood, and better employed, will, I truſt, teach a civilized poſterity to abhor the miſdeeds of both theſe barbarous ages. It will teach future prieſts and magiſtrates not to retaliate upon the ſpeculative and inactive atheiſts of future times, the enormities committed by the preſent practical zealots and furious fanaticks of that wretched errour, which, in its quieſcent ſtate, is more than puniſhed, whenever it is embraced. It will teach poſterity not to make war upon either religion or philoſophy, for the abuſe which the hypocrites of both have made of the two moſt valuable bleſſings conferred upon us by the bounty of the univerſal Patron, who in all things eminently favours and protects the race of man.

If your clergy, or any clergy, ſhould ſhew themſelves vicious beyond the fair bounds allowed to human infirmity, and to thoſe profeſſional faults which can hardly be ſeparated from profeſſional virtues, though their vices never can countenance the exerciſe of oppreſſion, I do admit, that they would naturally have the effect of abating very much of our indignation againſt the tyrants who exceed

exceed meaſure and juſtice in their puniſhment. I can allow in clergymen, through all their diviſions, ſome tenaciouſneſs of their own opinion; ſome overflowings of zeal for its propagation; ſome predilection to their own ſtate and office; ſome attachment to the intereſt of their own corps; ſome preference to thoſe who liſten with docility to their doctrines, beyond thoſe who ſcorn and deride them. I allow all this, becauſe I am a man who have to deal with men, and who would not, through a violence of toleration, run into the greateſt of all intolerance, I muſt bear with infirmities until they feſter into crimes.

Undoubtedly, the natural progreſs of the paſſions, from frailty to vice, ought to be prevented by a watchful eye and a firm hand. But is it true that the body of your clergy had paſt thoſe limits of a juſt allowance? From the general ſtyle of your late publications of all ſorts, one would be led to believe that your clergy in France were a ſort of monſters; an horrible compoſition of ſuperſtition, ignorance, ſloth, fraud, avarice, and tyranny. But is this true? Is it true, that the lapſe of time, the ceſſation of conflicting intereſts, the woeful experience of the evils reſulting from party rage, have had no ſort of influence gradually to meliorate their minds? Is it true, that they were daily renewing invaſions on the civil power, troubling the domeſtick quiet of their country, and

rendering the operations of its government feeble and precarious? Is it true, that the clergy of our times have preſſed down the laity with an iron hand, and were, in all places, lighting up the fires of a ſavage perſecution? Did they by every fraud endeavour to increaſe their eſtates? Did they uſe to exceed the due demands on eſtates that were their own? Or, rigidly ſcrewing up right into wrong, did they convert a legal claim into a vexatious extortion? When not poſſeſſed of power, were they filled with the vices of thoſe who envy it? Were they inflamed with a violent litigious ſpirit of controverſy? Goaded on with the ambition of intellectual ſovereignty, were they ready to fly in the face of all magiſtracy, to fire churches, to maſſacre the prieſts of other deſcriptions, to pull down altars, and to make their way over the ruins of ſubverted governments to an empire of doctrine, ſometimes flattering, ſometimes forcing the conſciences of men from the juriſdiction of publick inſtitutions into a ſubmiſſion to their perſonal authority, beginning with a claim of liberty and ending with an abuſe of power?

Theſe, or ſome of theſe, were the vices objected, and not wholly without foundation, to ſeveral of the churchmen of former times, who belonged to the two great parties which then divided and diſtracted Europe.

If there was in France, as in other countries there

there viſibly is, a great abatement, rather than any increaſe of theſe vices, inſtead of loading the preſent clergy with the crimes of other men, and the odious character of other times, in common equity they ought to be praiſed, encouraged, and ſupported, in their departure from a ſpirit which diſgraced their predeceſſors, and for having aſſumed a temper of mind and manners more ſuitable to their ſacred function.

When my occaſions took me into France, towards the cloſe of the late reign, the clergy, under all their forms, engaged a conſiderable part of my curioſity. So far from finding (except from one ſet of men, not then very numerous though very active) the complaints and diſcontents againſt that body, which ſome publications had given me reaſon to expect, I perceived little or no publick or private uneaſineſs on their account. On further examination, I found the clergy in general, perſons of moderate minds and decorous manners; I include the ſeculars, and the regulars of both ſexes. I had not the good fortune to know a great many of the parochial clergy; but in general I received a perfectly good account of their morals, and of their attention to their duties. With ſome of the higher clergy I had a perſonal acquaintance; and of the reſt in that claſs, a very good means of information. They were, almoſt all of them, perſons of noble birth. They reſembled others of their

their own rank; and where there was any difference, it was in their favour. They were more fully educated than the military nobleſſe; ſo as by no means to diſgrace their profeſſion by ignorance, or by want of fitneſs for the exerciſe of their authority. They ſeemed to me, beyond the clerical character, liberal and open; with the hearts of gentlemen, and men of honour; neither inſolent nor ſervile in their manners and conduct. They ſeemed to me rather a ſuperiour claſs; a ſet of men, amongſt whom you would not be ſurpriſed to find a *Fenélon*. I ſaw among the clergy in Paris (many of the deſcription are not to be met with any where) men of great learning and candour; and I had reaſon to believe, that this deſcription was not confined to Paris. What I found in other places, I know was accidental; and therefore to be preſumed a fair ſample. I ſpent a few days in a provincial town, where, in the abſence of the biſhop, I paſſed my evenings with three clergymen, his vicars-general, perſons who would have done honour to any church. They were all well informed; two of them of deep, general, and extenſive erudition, ancient and modern, oriental and weſtern; particularly in their own profeſſion. They had a more extenſive knowledge of our Engliſh divines than I expected; and they entered into the genius of thoſe writers with a critical accuracy. One of theſe gentlemen is ſince dead, the Abbé *Morangis*.

I pay

I pay this tribute, without reluctance, to the memory of that noble, reverend, learned, and excellent perſon; and I ſhould do the ſame, with equal cheerfulneſs, to the merits of the others, who I believe are ſtill living, if I did not fear to hurt thoſe whom I am unable to ſerve.

Some of theſe eccleſiaſticks, of rank, are, by all titles, perſons deſerving of general reſpect. They are deſerving of gratitude from me, and from many Engliſh. If this letter ſhould ever come into their hands, I hope they will believe there are thoſe of our nation who feel for their unmerited fall, and for the cruel confiſcation of their fortunes, with no common ſenſibility. What I ſay of them is a teſtimony, as far as one feeble voice can go, which I owe to truth. Whenever the queſtion of this unnatural perſecution is concerned, I will pay it. No one ſhall prevent me from being juſt and grateful. The time is fitted for the duty; and it is particularly becoming to ſhew our juſtice and gratitude, when thoſe who have deſerved well of us and of mankind are labouring under popular obloquy and the perſecutions of oppreſſive power.

You had before your revolution about an hundred and twenty biſhops. A few of them were men of eminent ſanctity, and charity without limit. When we talk of the heroick, of courſe we talk of rare, virtue. I believe the inſtances of eminent depravity

depravity may be as rare amongſt them as thoſe of tranſcendant goodneſs. Examples of avarice and of licentiouſneſs may be picked out, I do not queſtion it, by thoſe who delight in the inveſtigation which leads to ſuch diſcoveries. A man, as old as I am, will not be aſtoniſhed that ſeveral, in every deſcription, do not lead that perfect life of ſelf-denial, with regard to wealth or to pleaſure, which is wiſhed for by all, by ſome expected, but by none exacted with more rigour, than by thoſe who are the moſt attentive to their own intereſts, or the moſt indulgent to their own paſſions. When I was in France, I am certain that the number of vicious prelates was not great. Certain individuals among them, not diſtinguiſhable for the regularity of their lives, made ſome amends for their want of the ſevere virtues, in their poſſeſſion of the liberal; and were endowed with qualities which made them uſeful in the church and ſtate. I am told, that with few exceptions, Louis the Sixteenth had been more attentive to character, in his promotions to that rank, than his immediate predeceſſor; and I believe (as ſome ſpirit of reform has prevailed through the whole reign) that it may be true. But the preſent ruling power has ſhewn a diſpoſition only to plunder the church. It has puniſhed *all* prelates; which is to favour the vicious, at leaſt in point of reputation. It has made a degrading penſionary eſtabliſhment, to which

which no man of liberal ideas or liberal condition will deſtine his children. It muſt ſettle into the loweſt claſſes of the people. As with you the inferiour clergy are not numerous enough for their duties; as theſe duties are, beyond meaſure, minute and toilſome; as you have left no middle claſſes of clergy at their eaſe, in future nothing of ſcience or erudition can exiſt in the Gallican church. To complete the project, without the leaſt attention to the rights of patrons, the aſſembly has provided in future an elective clergy; an arrangement which will drive out of the clerical profeſſion all men of ſobriety; all who can pretend to independence in their function or their conduct; and which will throw the whole direction of the publick mind into the hands of a ſet of licentious, bold, crafty, factious, flattering wretches, of ſuch condition and ſuch habits of life as will make their contemptible penſions (in compariſon of which the ſtipend of an exciſeman is lucrative and honourable) an object of low and illiberal intrigue. Thoſe officers, whom they ſtill call biſhops, are to be elected to a proviſion comparatively mean, through the ſame arts, (that is, electioneering arts) by men of all religious tenets that are known or can be invented. The new lawgivers have not aſcertained any thing whatſoever concerning their qualifications, relative either to doctrine or to morals; no more than they have done

with regard to the ſubordinate clergy; nor does it appear but that both the higher and the lower may, at their diſcretion, practiſe or preach any mode of religion or irreligion that they pleaſe. I do not yet ſee what the juriſdiction of biſhops over their ſubordinates is to be; or whether they are to have any juriſdiction at all.

In ſhort, Sir, it ſeems to me, that this new eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment is intended only to be temporary, and preparatory to the utter abolition, under any of its forms, of the chriſtian religion, whenever the minds of men are prepared for this laſt ſtroke againſt it, by the accompliſhment of the plan for bringing its miniſters into univerſal contempt. They who will not believe, that the philoſophical fanaticks who guide in theſe matters, have long entertained ſuch a deſign, are utterly ignorant of their character and proceedings. Theſe enthuſiaſts do not ſcruple to avow their opinion, that a ſtate can ſubſiſt without any religion better than with one; and that they are able to ſupply the place of any good which may be in it, by a project of their own—namely, by a ſort of education they have imagined, founded in a knowledge of the phyſical wants of men; progreſſively carried to an enlightened ſelf-intereſt, which, when well underſtood, they tell us, will identify with an intereſt more enlarged and publick. The ſcheme of this education has been long known. Of late

they diſtinguiſh it (as they have got an intire new nomenclature of technical terms) by the name of a *Civick Education.*

I hope their partiſans in England (to whom I rather attribute very inconſiderate conduct than the ultimate object in this deteſtable deſign) will ſucceed neither in the pillage of the eccleſiaſticks, nor in the introduction of a principle of popular election to our biſhopricks and parochial cures. This, in the preſent condition of the world, would be the laſt corruption of the church; the utter ruin of the clerical character; the moſt dangerous ſhock that the ſtate ever received through a miſunderſtood arrangement of religion. I know well enough that the biſhopricks and cures, under kingly and ſeignoral patronage, as now they are in England, and as they have been lately in France, are ſometimes acquired by unworthy methods; but the other mode of eccleſiaſtical canvaſs ſubjects them infinitely more ſurely and more generally to all the evil arts of low ambition, which, operating on and through greater numbers, will produce miſchief in proportion.

Thoſe of you who have robbed the clergy, think that they ſhall eaſily reconcile their conduct to all proteſtant nations; becauſe the clergy, whom they have thus plundered, degraded, and given over to mockery and ſcorn, are of the Roman Catholick, that is, of *their own* pretended perſuaſion.

ſion. I have no doubt that ſome miſerable bigots will be found here as well as elſewhere, who hate ſects and parties different from their own, more than they love the ſubſtance of religion; and who are more angry with thoſe who differ from them in their particular plans and ſyſtems, than diſpleaſed with thoſe who attack the foundation of our common hope. Theſe men will write and ſpeak on the ſubject in the manner that is to be expected from their temper and character. Burnet ſays, that when he was in France, in the year 1683, "the method which carried over the men "of the fineſt parts to popery was this——they "brought themſelves to doubt of the whole chriſ-"tian religion. When that was once done, it "ſeemed a more indifferent thing of what ſide or "form they continued outwardly." If this was then the eccleſiaſtick policy of France, it is what they have ſince but too much reaſon to repent of. They preferred atheiſm to a form of religion not agreeable to their ideas. They ſucceeded in deſtroying that form; and atheiſm has ſucceeded in deſtroying them. I can readily give credit to Burnet's ſtory; becauſe I have obſerved too much of a ſimilar ſpirit (for a little of it is "much too "much") amongſt ourſelves. The humour, however, is not general.

The teachers who reformed our religion in England bore no ſort of reſemblance to your preſent reforming

reforming doctors in Paris. Perhaps they were (like thoſe whom they oppoſed) rather more than could be wiſhed under the influence of a party ſpirit; but they were moſt ſincere believers; men of the moſt fervent and exalted piety; ready to die (as ſome of them did die) like true heroes in defence of their particular ideas of chriſtianity; as they would with equal fortitude, and more chearfully, for that ſtock of general truth, for the branches of which they contended with their blood. Theſe men would have diſavowed with horrour thoſe wretches who claimed a fellowſhip with them upon no other titles than thoſe of their having pillaged the perſons with whom they maintained controverſies, and their having deſpiſed the common religion, for the purity of which they exerted themſelves with a zeal, which unequivocally beſpoke their higheſt reverence for the ſubſtance of that ſyſtem which they wiſhed to reform. Many of their deſcendants have rétained the ſame zeal, but (as leſs engaged in conflict) with more moderation. They do not forget that juſtice and mercy are ſubſtantial parts of religion. Impious men do not recommend themſelves to their communion by iniquity and cruelty towards any deſcription of their fellow-creatures.

We hear theſe new teachers continually boaſting of their ſpirit of toleration. That thoſe perſons ſhould tolerate all opinions, who think none

to be of eſtimation, is a matter of ſmall merit. Equal neglect is not impartial kindneſs. The ſpecies of benevolence, which ariſes from contempt, is no true charity. There are in England abundance of men who tolerate in the true ſpirit of toleration. They think the dogmas of religion, though in different degrees, are all of moment; and that amongſt them there is, as amongſt all things of value, a juſt ground of preference. They favour, therefore, and they tolerate. They tolerate, not becauſe they deſpiſe opinions, but becauſe they reſpect juſtice. They would reverently and affectionately protect all religions, becauſe they love and venerate the great principle upon which they all agree, and the great object to which they are all directed. They begin more and more plainly to diſcern, that we have all a common cauſe, as againſt a common enemy. They will not be ſo miſled by the ſpirit of faction, as not to diſtinguiſh what is done in favour of their ſubdiviſion, from thoſe acts of hoſtility, which, through ſome particular deſcription, are aimed at the whole corps, in which they themſelves, under another denomination, are included. It is impoſſible for me to ſay what may be the character of every deſcription of men amongſt us. But I ſpeak for the greater part; and for them, I muſt tell you, that ſacrilege is no part of their doctrine of good works; that, ſo far from calling you into their fellowſhip

fellowſhip on ſuch title, if your profeſſors are admitted to their communion, they muſt carefully conceal their doctrine of the lawfulneſs of the proſcription of innocent men; and that they muſt make reſtitution of all ſtolen goods whatſoever. Till then they are none of ours.

You may ſuppoſe that we do not approve your confiſcation of the revenues of biſhops, and deans, and chapters, and parochial clergy poſſeſſing independent eſtates ariſing from land, becauſe we have the ſame ſort of eſtabliſhment in England. That objection, you will ſay, cannot hold as to the confiſcation of the goods of monks and nuns, and the abolition of their order. It is true that this particular part of your general confiſcation does not affect England, as a precedent in point: but the reaſon applies, and it goes a great way. The long parliament confiſcated the lands of deans and chapters in England on the ſame ideas upon which your aſſembly ſet to ſale the lands of the monaſtick orders. But it is in the principle of injuſtice that the danger lies, and not in the deſcription of perſons on whom it is firſt exerciſed. I ſee, in a country very near us, a courſe of policy purſued, which ſets juſtice, the common concern of mankind, at defiance. With the national aſſembly of France, poſſeſſion is nothing, law and uſage are nothing. I ſee the national aſſembly openly re-

probate the doctrine of preſcription, which one of the greateſt of their own lawyers * tells us, with great truth, is a part of the law of nature. He tells us, that the poſitive aſcertainment of its limits, and its ſecurity from invaſion, were among the cauſes for which civil ſociety itſelf has been inſtituted. If preſcription be once ſhaken, no ſpecies of property is ſecure, when it once becomes an object large enough to tempt the cupidity of indigent power. I ſee a practice perfectly correſpondent to their contempt of this great fundamental part of natural law. I ſee the confiſcators begin with biſhops, and chapters, and monaſteries; but I do not ſee them end there. I ſee the princes of the blood, who, by the oldeſt uſages of that kingdom, held large landed eſtates, (hardly with the compliment of a debate) deprived of their poſſeſſions, and in lieu of their ſtable independent property, reduced to the hope of ſome precarious, charitable penſion, at the pleaſure of an aſſembly, which of courſe will pay little regard to the rights of penſioners at pleaſure, when it deſpiſes thoſe of legal proprietors. Fluſhed with the inſolence of their firſt inglorious victories, and preſſed by the diſtreſſes cauſed by their luſt of unhallowed lucre, diſappointed but not diſcouraged, they have at length ventured completely to ſubvert all pro-

* Domat.

perty

perty of all deſcriptions throughout the extent of a great kingdom. They have compelled all men, in all tranſactions of commerce, in the diſpoſal of lands, in civil dealing, and through the whole communion of life, to accept as perfect payment and good and lawful tender, the ſymbols of their ſpeculations on a projected ſale of their plunder. What veſtiges of liberty or property have they left? The tenant-right of a cabbage-garden, a year's intereſt in a hovel, the good-will of an ale-houſe or a baker's ſhop, the very ſhadow of a conſtructive property, are more ceremoniouſly treated in our parliament than with you the oldeſt and moſt valuable landed poſſeſſions, in the hands of the moſt reſpectable perſonages, or than the whole body of the monied and commercial intereſt of your country. We entertain a high opinion of the legiſlative authority; but we have never dreamt that parliaments had any right whatever to violate property, to over-rule preſcription, or to force a currency of their own fiction in the place of that which is real, and recognized by the law of nations. But you, who began with refuſing to ſubmit to the moſt moderate reſtraints, have ended by eſtabliſhing an unheard-of deſpotiſm. I find the ground upon which your confiſcators go is this; that indeed their proceedings could not be ſupported in a court of juſtice; but that the rules of preſcription cannot bind a legiſla-

tive aſſembly *. So that this legiſlative aſſembly of a free nation ſits, not for the ſecurity, but for the deſtruction of property, and not of property only, but of every rule and maxim which can give it ſtability, and of thoſe inſtruments which can alone give it circulation.

When the anabaptiſts of Munſter, in the ſixteenth century, had filled Germany with confuſion, by their ſyſtem of levelling, and their wild opinions concerning property, to what country in Europe did not the progreſs of their fury furniſh juſt cauſe of alarm? Of all things, wiſdom is the moſt terrified with epidemical fanaticiſm, becauſe of all enemies it is that againſt which ſhe is the leaſt able to furniſh any kind of reſource. We cannot be ignorant of the ſpirit of atheiſtical fanaticiſm, that is inſpired by a multitude of writings, diſperſed with incredible aſſiduity and expence, and by ſermons delivered in all the ſtreets and places of publick reſort in Paris. Theſe writings and ſermons have filled the populace with a black and ſavage atrocity of mind, which ſuperſedes in them the common feelings of nature, as well as all ſentiments of morality and religion; inſomuch that theſe wretches are induced to bear with a ſullen patience the intolerable diſtreſſes brought upon them by the violent convulſions and permutations

* Speech of Mr. Camus, publiſhed by order of the national aſſembly.

that

that have been made in property *. The ſpirit of proſelytiſm attends this ſpirit of fanaticiſm. They have ſocieties to cabal and correſpond at home and abroad for the propagation of their tenets. The republick of Berne, one of the happieſt, the moſt proſperous, and the beſt governed countries upon earth, is one of the great objects, at the

* Whether the following deſcription is ſtrictly true I know not; but it is what the publiſhers would have paſs for true, in order to animate others. In a letter from Toul, given in one of their papers, is the following paſſage concerning the people of that diſtrict: "Dans la révolution actuelle, ils ont réſiſté à "toutes les *ſéductions du bigotiſme, aux perſécutions et aux tra-* "*caſſeries* des ennemis de la révolution. *Oubliant leurs plus* "*grands intérêts* pour rendre hommage aux veus d'ordre géné-" ral qui ont déterminé l'aſſemblée nationale, ils voient, *ſans* "*ſe plaindre*, ſupprimer cette foule d'établiſſemens eccléſiaſti-" ques par leſquels *ils ſubſiſtoient;* et même, en perdant leur "ſiège épiſcopal, la ſeule de toutes ces reſſources qui pouvoit, "ou plutôt *qui devoit, en toute équité*, leur être conſervée; "condamnés *à la plus effrayante misère* ſans avoir *été ni pu* "*être entendus, ils ne murmurent point*, ils reſtent fidèles aux "principes du plus pur patriotiſme; ils ſont encore prêtes à "*verſer leur ſang* pour le maintien de la conſtitution, qui va "réduire leur ville *à la plus déplorable nullité.*" Theſe people are not ſuppoſed to have endured thoſe ſufferings and injuſtices in a ſtruggle for liberty, for the ſame account ſtates truly that they had been always free; their patience in beggary and rum, and their ſuffering, without remonſtrance, the moſt flagrant and confeſſed injuſtice, if ſtrictly true, can be nothing but the effect of this dire fanaticiſm. A great multitude all over France is in the ſame condition and the ſame temper.

deſtruction of which they aim. I am told they have in ſome meaſure ſucceeded in ſowing there the ſeeds of diſcontent. They are buſy throughout Germany. Spain and Italy have not been untried. England is not left out of the comprehenſive ſcheme of their malignant charity; and in England we find thoſe who ſtretch out their arms to them, who recommend their example from more than one pulpit, and who chooſe, in more than one periodical meeting, publickly to correſpond with them, to applaud them, and to hold them up as objects for imitation; who receive from them tokens of confraternity, and ſtandards conſecrated amidſt their rites and myſteries*; who ſuggeſt to them leagues of perpetual amity, at the very time when the power, to which our conſtitution has excluſively delegated the federative capacity of this kingdom, may find it expedient to make war upon them.

It is not the confiſcation of our church property from this example in France that I dread, though I think this would be no trifling evil. The great ſource of my ſolitude is, leſt it ſhould ever be conſidered in England as the policy of a ſtate to ſeek a reſource in confiſcations of any kind; or that any one deſcription of citizens ſhould be brought to regard any of the others as their proper

* See the proceedings of the confederation at *Nantz*.

prey *. Nations are wading deeper and deeper into an ocean of boundleſs debt. Publick debts which at firſt were a ſecurity to governments, by intereſting many in the publick tranquillity, are likely in their exceſs to become the means of their ſubverſion. If governments provide for theſe debts by heavy impoſitions, they periſh by becoming odious to the people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the moſt dangerous of all parties; I mean an ex-

* "Si plures ſunt ii quibus improbe datum eſt, quam illi qui-
" bus injuſte ademptum eſt, idcirco plus etiam valent? Non
" enim numero hæc judicantur ſed pondere. Quam autem ha-
" bet æquitatem, ut agrum multis annis, aut etiam ſæculis ante
" poſſeſſum, qui nullum habuit habeat; qui autum habuit amit-
" tat. Ac, propter hoc injuriæ genus, Lacedæmonii Lyſan-
" drum Ephorum expulerunt: Agin regem (quod nunquam
" antea apud eos acciderat) necaverunt: exque eo tempore
" tantæ diſcordiæ ſecutæ ſunt, ut et tyranni exſiſterint, et opti-
" mates exterminarentur, et preclariſſime conſtituta reſpublica
" dilaberetur. Nec vero ſolum ipſa cecidit, ſed etiam reliquam
" Græciam evertit contagionibus malorum, quæ a Lacedæmo-
" niis profectæ manarunt latius."—After ſpeaking of the con-
duct of the model of true patriots, Aratus of Sycion, which was
in a very different ſpirit, he ſays, " Sic par eſt agere cum civi-
" bus; non ut bis jam vidimus, haſtam in foro ponere et bona
" civium voci ſubjicere præconis. At ille Græcus (id quod
" fuit ſapientis et præſtantis viri) omnibus conſulendum eſſe
" putavit: eaque eſt ſumma ratio et ſapientia boni civis, com-
" moda civium non divellere, ſed omnes eadem æquitate
continere."—Cic. Off. l.

tenſive

tenſive diſcontented monied intereſt, injured and not deſtroyed. The men who compoſe this intereſt look for their ſecurity, in the firſt inſtance, to the fidelity of government; in the ſecond, to its power. If they find the old governments effete, worn out, and with their ſprings relaxed, ſo as not to be of ſufficient vigour for their purpoſes, they may ſeek new ones that ſhall be poſſeſſed of more energy; and this energy will be derived, not from an acquiſition of reſources, but from a contempt of juſtice. Revolutions are favourable to confiſcation; and it is impoſſible to know under what obnoxious names the next confiſcations will be authorized. I am ſure that the principles predominant in France extend to very many perſons and deſcriptions of perſons in all countries who think their innoxious indolence their ſecurity. This kind of innocence in proprietors may be argued into inutility; and inutility into an unfitneſs for their eſtates. Many parts of Europe are in open diſorder. In many others there is a hollow murmuring under ground; a confuſed movement is felt, that threatens a general earthquake in the political world. Already confederacies and correſpondencies of the moſt extraordinary nature are forming, in ſeveral countries*. In ſuch a ſtate

* See two books intitled, Enige Originalſchriften des Illuminatenordens.——Syſtem und Folgen des Illuminatenordens. Munchen, 1787.

of things we ought to hold ourſelves upon our guard. In all mutations (if mutations muſt be) the circumſtance which will ſerve moſt to blunt the edge of their miſchief, and to promote what good may be in them, is, that they ſhould find us with our minds tenacious of juſtice, and tender of property.

But it will be argued, that this confiſcation in France ought not to alarm other nations. They ſay it is not made from wanton rapacity; that it is a great meaſure of national policy, adopted to remove an extenſive, inveterate, ſuperſtitious miſchief. It is with the greateſt difficulty that I am able to ſeparate policy from juſtice. Juſtice is itſelf the great ſtanding policy of civil ſociety; and any eminent departure from it, under any circumſtances, lies under the ſuſpicion of being no policy at all.

When men are encouraged to go into a certain mode of life by the exiſting laws, and protected in that mode as in a lawful occupation—when they have accommodated all their ideas and all their habits to it—when the law had long made their adherence to its rules a ground of reputation, and their departure from them a ground of diſgrace and even of penalty—I am ſure it is unjuſt in legiſlature, by an arbitrary act, to offer a ſudden violence to their minds and their feelings; forcibly to degrade them from their ſtate and condition,

condition, and to ſtigmatiſe with ſhame and infamy that character and thoſe cuſtoms which before had been made the meaſure of their happineſs and honour. If to this be added an expulſion from their habitations, and a confiſcation of all their goods, I am not ſagacious enough to diſcover how this deſpotick ſport, made of the feelings, conſciences, prejudices, and properties of men, can be diſcriminated from the rankeſt tyranny.

If the injuſtice of the courſe purſued in France be clear, the policy of the meaſure, that is the publick benefit to be expected from it, ought to be at leaſt as evident, and at leaſt as important. To a man who acts under the influence of no paſſion, who has nothing in view in his projects but the publick good, a great difference will immediately ſtrike him, between what policy would dictate on the original introduction of ſuch inſtitutions, and on a queſtion of their total abolition, where they have caſt their roots wide and deep, and where, by long habit, things more valuable than themſelves are ſo adapted to them, and in a manner interwoven with them, that the one cannot be deſtroyed without notably impairing the other. He might be embarraſſed if the caſe were really ſuch as ſophiſters repreſent it in their paltry ſtyle of debating. But in this, as in moſt queſtions of ſtate, there is a middle. There is ſome-

thing

thing elſe than the mere alternative of abſolute deſtruction, or unreformed exiſtence. *Spartam nactus es; hanc exorna.* This is, in my opinion, a rule of profound ſenſe, and ought never to depart from the mind of an honeſt reformer. I cannot conceive how any man can have brought himſelf to that pitch of preſumption, to conſider his country as nothing but *carte blanche*, upon which he may ſcribble whatever he pleaſes. A man full of warm ſpeculative benevolence may wiſh his ſociety otherwiſe conſtituted than he finds it; but a good patriot, and a true politician, always conſiders how he ſhall make the moſt of the exiſting materials of his country. A diſpoſition to preſerve, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my ſtandard of a ſtateſman. Every thing elſe is vulgar in the conception, perilous in the execution.

There are moments in the fortune of ſtates when particular men are called to make improvements by great mental exertion. In thoſe moments, even when they ſeem to enjoy the confidence of their prince and country, and to be inveſted with full authority, they have not always apt inſtruments. A politician, to do great things, looks for a *power*, what our workmen call a *purchaſe;* and if he finds that power, in politicks as in mechanicks he cannot be at a loſs to apply it. In the monaſtick inſtitutions, in my opinion, was found

found a great *power* for the mechaniſm of politick benevolence. There were revenues with a publick direction; there were men wholly ſet apart and dedicated to publick purpoſes, without any other than publick ties and publick principles; men without the poſſibility of converting the eſtate of the community into a private fortune; men denied to ſelf-intereſts, whoſe avarice is for ſome community; men to whom perſonal poverty is honour, and implicit obedience ſtands in the place of freedom. In vain ſhall a man look to the poſſibility of making ſuch things when he wants them. The winds blow as they liſt. Theſe inſtitutions are the products of enthuſiaſm; they are the inſtruments of wiſdom. Wiſdom cannot create materials; they are the gifts of nature or of chance; her pride is in the uſe. The perennial exiſtence of bodies corporate and their fortunes, are things particularly ſuited to a man who has long views; who meditates deſigns that require time in faſhioning; and which propoſe duration when they are accompliſhed. He is not deſerving to rank high, or even to be mentioned in the order of great ſtateſmen, who, having obtained the command and direction of ſuch a power as exiſted in the wealth, the diſcipline, and the habits of ſuch corporations, as thoſe which you have raſhly deſtroyed, cannot find any way of converting it to the great and laſting benefit of his country. On

the

the view of this ſubject, a thouſand uſes ſuggeſt themſelves to a contriving mind. To deſtroy any power, growing wild from the rank productive force of the human mind, is almoſt tantamount, in the moral world, to the deſtruction of the apparently active properties of bodies in the material. It would be like the attempt to deſtroy (if it were in our competence to deſtroy) the expanſive force of fixed air in nitre, or the power of ſteam, or of electricity, or of magnetiſm. Theſe energies always exiſted in nature, and they were always diſcernible. They ſeemed, ſome of them unſerviceable, ſome noxious, ſome no better than a ſport to children; until contemplative ability, combining with practick ſkill, tamed their wild nature, ſubdued them to uſe, and rendered them at once the moſt powerful and the moſt tractable agents, in ſubſervience to the great views and deſigns of men. Did fifty thouſand perſons, whoſe mental and whoſe bodily labour you might direct, and ſo many hundred thouſand a year of a revenue, which was neither lazy nor ſuperſtitious, appear too big for your abilities to wield? Had you no way of uſing the men but by converting monks into penſioners? Had you no way of turning the revenue to account, but through the improvident reſource of a ſpendthrift ſale? If you were thus deſtitute of mental funds, the proceeding is in its natural courſe. Your politicians do not underſtand

ſtand their trade; and therefore they ſell their tools.

But the inſtitutions favour of ſuperſtition in their very principle; and they nouriſh it by a permanent and ſtanding influence. This I do not mean to diſpute; but this ought not to hinder you from deriving from ſuperſtition itſelf any reſources which may thence be furniſhed for the publick advantage. You derive benefits from many diſpoſitions and many paſſions of the human mind which are of as doubtful a colour in the moral eye, as ſuperſtition itſelf. It was your buſineſs to correct and mitigate every thing which was noxious in this paſſion, as in all the paſſions. But is ſuperſtition the greateſt of all poſſible vices? In its poſſible exceſs I think it becomes a very great evil. It is, however, a moral ſubject; and of courſe admits of all degrees and all modifications. Superſtition is the religion of feeble minds; and they muſt be tolerated in an intermixture of it, in ſome trifling or ſome enthuſiaſtick ſhape or other, elſe you will deprive weak minds of a reſource found neceſſary to the ſtrongeſt. The body of all true religion conſiſts, to be ſure, in obedience to the will of the ſovereign of the world; in a confidence in his declarations; and in imitation of his perfections. The reſt is our own. It may be prejudicial to the great end; it may be auxiliary. Wiſe men, who as ſuch, are not *admirers* (not admirers

mirers at leaſt of the *Munera Terræ*) are not violently attached to theſe things, nor do they violently hate them. Wiſdom is not the moſt ſevere corrector of folly. They are the rival follies, which mutually wage ſo unrelenting a war; and which make ſo cruel an uſe of their advantages, as they can happen to engage the immoderate vulgar on the one ſide or the other in their quarrels. Prudence would be neuter; but if, in the contention between fond attachment and fierce antipathy concerning things in their nature not made to produce ſuch heats, a prudent man were obliged to make a choice of what errours and exceſſes of enthuſiaſm he would condemn or bear, perhaps he would think the ſuperſtition which builds, to be more tolerable than that which demoliſhes—that which adorns a country, than that which deforms it—that which endows, than that which plunders—that which diſpoſes to miſtaken beneficence, than that which ſtimulates to real injuſtice—that which leads a man to refuſe to himſelf lawful pleaſures, than that which ſnatches from others the ſcanty ſubſiſtence of their ſelf-denial. Such, I think, is very nearly the ſtate of the queſtion between the ancient founders of monkiſh ſuperſtition, and the ſuperſtition of the pretended philoſophers of the hour.

For the preſent I poſtpone all conſideration of the ſuppoſed publick profit of the ſale, which

however I conceive to be perfectly delusive. I shall here only consider it as a transfer of property. On the policy of that transfer I shall trouble you with a few thoughts.

In every prosperous community something more is produced than goes to the immediate support of the producer. This surplus forms the income of the landed capitalist. It will be spent by a proprietor who does not labour. But this idleness is itself the spring of labour; this repose the spur to industry. The only concern for the state is, that the capital taken in rent from the land, should be returned again to the industry from whence it came; and that its expenditure should be with the least possible detriment to the morals of those who expend it, and to those of the people to whom it is returned.

In all the views of receipt, expenditure, and personal employment, a sober legislator would carefully compare the possessor whom he was recommended to expel, with the stranger who was proposed to fill his place. Before the inconveniences are incurred which *must* attend all violent revolutions in property through extensive confiscation, we ought to have some rational assurance that the purchasers of the confiscated property will be in a considerable degree more laborious, more virtuous, more sober, less disposed to extort an unreasonable proportion of the gains of the labourer,

labourer, or to conſume on themſelves a larger ſhare than is fit for the meaſure of an individual, or that they ſhould be qualified to diſpenſe the ſurplus in a more ſteady and equal mode, ſo as to anſwer the purpoſes of a politick expenditure, than the old poſſeſſors, call thoſe poſſeſſors, biſhops, or canons, or commendatory abbots, or monks, or what you pleaſe. The monks are lazy. Be it ſo. Suppoſe them no otherwiſe employed than by ſinging in the choir. They are as uſefully employed as thoſe who neither ſing nor ſay. As uſefully even as thoſe who ſing upon the ſtage. They are as uſefully employed as if they worked from dawn to dark in the innumerable ſervile, degrading, unſeemly, unmanly, and often moſt unwholeſome and peſtiferous occupations, to which by the ſocial œconomy ſo many wretches are inevitably doomed. If it were not generally pernicious to diſturb the natural courſe of things, and to impede, in any degree, the great wheel of circulation which is turned by the ſtrangely-directed labour of theſe unhappy people, I ſhould be infinitely more inclined forcibly to reſcue them from their miſerable induſtry, than violently to diſturb the tranquil repoſe of monaſtick quietude. Humanity, and perhaps policy, might better juſtify me in the one than in the other. It is a ſubject on which I have often reflected, and never reflected without feeling from it. I am ſure that no conſideration,

except the neceſſity of ſubmitting to the yoke of luxury, and the deſpotiſm of fancy, who in their own imperious way will diſtribute the ſurplus product of the ſoil, can juſtify the toleration of ſuch trades and employments in a well-regulated ſtate. But for this purpoſe of diſtribution, it ſeems to me, that the idle expences of monks are quite as well directed as the idle expences of us lay-loiterers.

When the advantages of the poſſeſſion, and of the project are on a par, there is no motive for a change. But in the preſent caſe, perhaps they are not upon a par, and the difference is in favour of the poſſeſſion. It does not appear to me, that the expences of thoſe whom you are going to expel, do, in fact, take a courſe ſo directly and ſo generally leading to vitiate and degrade and render miſerable thoſe through whom they paſs, as the expences of thoſe favourites whom you are intruding into their houſes. Why ſhould the expenditure of a great landed property, which is a diſperſion of the ſurplus product of the ſoil, appear intolerable to you or to me, when it takes its courſe through the accumulation of vaſt libraries, which are the hiſtory of the force and weakneſs of the human mind; through great collections of ancient records, medals, and coins, which atteſt and explain laws and cuſtoms; through paintings and ſtatues, that, by imitating nature, ſeem to extend the

the limits of creation; through grand monuments of the dead, which continue the regards and connexions of life beyond the grave; through collections of the ſpecimens of nature, which become a repreſentative aſſembly of all the claſſes and families of the world, that by diſpoſition facilitate, and, by exciting curioſity, open the avenues to ſcience? If, by great permanent eſtabliſhments, all theſe objects of expence are better ſecured from the inconſtant ſport of perſonal caprice and perſonal extravagance, are they worſe than if the ſame taſtes prevailed in ſcattered individuals? Does not the ſweat of the maſon and carpenter, who toil in order to partake the ſweat of the peaſant, flow as pleaſantly and as ſalubriouſly, in the conſtruction and repair of the majeſtick edifices of religion, as in the painted booths and ſordid ſties of vice and luxury; as honourably and as profitably in repairing thoſe ſacred works, which grow hoary with innumerable years, as on the momentary receptacles of tranſient voluptuouſneſs; in opera-houſes, and brothels, and gaming-houſes, and club-houſes, and obeliſks in the Champ de Mars? Is the ſurplus product of the olive and the vine worſe employed in the frugal ſuſtenance of perſons, whom the fictions of a pious imagination raiſe to dignity by conſtruing in the ſervice of God, than in pampering the innumerable multitude of thoſe who are degraded by being made uſeleſs domeſticks, ſub-

ſervient to the pride of man? Are the decorations of temples an expenditure leſs worthy a wiſe man than ribbons, and laces, and national cockades, and petit maiſons, and petit ſoupers, and all the innumerable fopperies and follies in which opulence ſports away the burthen of its ſuperfluity?

We tolerate even theſe; not from love of them, but for fear of worſe. We tolerate them, becauſe property and liberty, to a degree, require that toleration. But why proſcribe the other, and ſurely, in every point of view, the more laudable uſe of eſtates? Why, through the violation of all property, through an outrage upon every principle of liberty, forcibly carry them from the better to the worſe?

This compariſon between the new individuals and the old corps, is made upon a ſuppoſition that no reform could be made in the latter. But in a queſtion of reformation, I always conſider corporate bodies, whether ſole or conſiſting of many, to be much more ſuſceptible of a publick direction by the power of the ſtate, in the uſe of their property, and in the regulation of modes and habits of life in their members than private citizens ever can be, or perhaps ought to be; and this ſeems to me a very material conſideration for thoſe who undertake any thing which merits the name of a politick enterpriſe.—So far as to the eſtates of monaſteries.

With

With regard to the eſtates poſſeſſed by biſhops and canons, and commendatory abbots, I cannot find out for what reaſon ſome landed eſtates may not be held otherwiſe than by inheritance. Can any philoſophick ſpoiler undertake to demonſtrate the poſitive or the comparative evil, of having a certain, and that too a large portion of landed property, paſſing in ſucceſſion through perſons whoſe title to it is, always in theory, and often in fact, an eminent degree of piety, morals, and learning; a property, which, by its deſtination, in their turn, and on the ſcore of merit, gives to the nobleſt families renovation and ſupport, to the loweſt the means of dignity and elevation; a property, the tenure to which is the performance of ſome duty, (whatever value you may chooſe to ſet upon that duty) and the character of whoſe proprietors demands at leaſt an exterior decorum and gravity of manners; who are to exerciſe a generous but temperate hoſpitality; part of whoſe income they are to conſider as a truſt for charity; and who, even when they fail in their truſt, when they ſlide from their character, and degenerate into a mere common ſecular nobleman or gentleman, are in no reſpect worſe than thoſe who may ſucceed them in their forfeited poſſeſſions? Is it better that eſtates ſhould be held by thoſe who have no duty than by thoſe who have one?—by thoſe whoſe character and deſtination point to

virtues, than by thoſe who have no rule and direction in the expenditure of their eſtates but their own will and appetite? Nor are theſe eſtates held altogether in the character or with the evils ſuppoſed inherent in mortmain. They paſs from hand to hand with a more rapid circulation than any other. No exceſs is good; and therefore too great a proportion of landed property may be held officially for life; but it does not ſeem to me of material injury to any commonwealth, that there ſhould exiſt ſome eſtates that have a chance of being acquired by other means than the previous acquiſition of money.

This letter is grown to a great length, though it is indeed ſhort with regard to the infinite extent of the ſubject. Various avocations have from time to time called my mind from the ſubject. I was not ſorry to give myſelf leiſure to obſerve whether, in the proceedings of the national aſſembly, I might not find reaſons to change or to qualify ſome of my firſt ſentiments. Every thing has confirmed me more ſtrongly in my firſt opinions. It was my original purpoſe to take a view of the principles of the national aſſembly with regard to the great and fundamental eſtabliſhments; and to compare the whole of what you have ſubſtituted in the place of what you have deſtroyed, with the ſeveral members of our Britiſh conſtitution. But this plan is of greater extent than at

firſt

firſt I computed, and I find that you have little deſire to take the advantage of any examples. At preſent I muſt content myſelf with ſome remarks upon your eſtabliſhments; reſerving for another time what I propoſed to ſay concerning the ſpirit of our Britiſh monarchy, ariſtocracy, and democracy, as practically they exiſt.

I have taken a view of what has been done by the governing power in France. I have certainly ſpoke of it with freedom. Thoſe whoſe principle it is to deſpiſe the ancient permanent ſenſe of mankind, and to ſet up a ſcheme of ſociety on new principles, muſt naturally expect that ſuch of us who think better of the judgment of the human race than of theirs, ſhould conſider both them and their devices, as men and ſchemes upon their trial. They muſt take it for granted that we attend much to their reaſon, but not at all to their authority. They have not one of the great influencing prejudices of mankind in their favour. They avow their hoſtility to opinion. Of courſe they muſt expect no ſupport from that influence, which, with every other authority, they have depoſed from the ſeat of its juriſdiction.

I can never conſider this aſſembly as any thing elſe than a voluntary aſſociation of men, who have availed themſelves of circumſtances, to ſeize upon the power of the ſtate. They have not the ſanction and authority of the character under which they

they firſt met. They have aſſumed another of a very different nature; and have completely altered and inverted all the relations in which they originally ſtood. They do not hold the authority they exerciſe under any conſtitutional law of the ſtate. They have departed from the inſtructions of the people by whom they were ſent; which inſtructions, as the aſſembly did not act in virtue of any ancient uſage or ſettled law, were the ſole ſource of their authority. The moſt conſiderable of their acts have not been done by great majorities; and in this ſort of near diviſions, which carry only the conſtructive authority of the whole, ſtrangers will conſider reaſons as well as reſolutions.

If they had ſet up this new experimental government, as a neceſſary ſubſtitute for an expelled tyranny, mankind would anticipate the time of preſcription, which, through long uſage, mellows into legality governments that were violent in their commencement. All thoſe who have affections which lead them to the conſervation of civil order would recogniſe, even in its cradle, the child as legitimate, which has been produced from thoſe principles of cogent expediency to which all juſt governments owe their birth, and on which they juſtify their continuance. But they will be late and reluctant in giving any ſort of countenance to the operations of a power, which has derived its birth

birth from no law and no neceſſity; but which on the contrary has had its origin in thoſe vices and ſiniſter practices by which the ſocial union is often diſturbed and ſometimes deſtroyed. This aſſembly has hardly a year's proſcription. We have their own word for it that they have made a revolution. To make a revolution is a meaſure which, *prima fronte*, requires an apology. To make a revolution is to ſubvert the ancient ſtate of our country; and no common reaſons are called for to juſtify ſo violent a proceeding. The ſenſe of mankind authorizes us to examine into the mode of acquiring new power, and to criticiſe on the uſe that is made of it with leſs awe and reverence than that which is uſually conceded to a ſettled and recogniſed authority.

In obtaining and ſecuring their power, the aſſembly proceeds upon principles the moſt oppoſite from thoſe which appear to direct them in the uſe of it. An obſervation on this difference will let us into the true ſpirit of their conduct. Every thing which they have done, or continue to do, in order to obtain and keep their power, is by the moſt common arts. They proceed exactly as their anceſtors of ambition have done before them.—Trace them through all their artifices, frauds, and violences, you can find nothing at all that is new. They follow precedents and examples with the punctilious exactneſs of a pleader. They never depart

depart an iota from the authentick formulas of tyranny and uſurpation. But in all the regulations relative to the publick good, the ſpirit has been the very reverſe of this. There they commit the whole to the mercy of untried ſpeculations; they abandon the deareſt intereſts of the publick to thoſe looſe theories, to which none of them would chooſe to truſt the ſlighteſt of his private concerns. They make this difference, becauſe in their deſire of obtaining and ſecuring power they are thoroughly in earneſt; there they travel in the beaten road. The publick intereſts, becauſe about them they have no real ſolicitude, they abandon wholly to chance; I ſay to chance, becauſe their ſchemes have nothing in experience to prove their tendency beneficial.

We muſt always ſee with a pity not unmixed with reſpect, the errours of thoſe who are timid and doubtful of themſelves with regard to points wherein the happineſs of mankind is concerned. But in theſe gentlemen there is nothing of the tender parental ſolicitude which fears to cut up the infant for the ſake of an experiment. In the vaſtneſs of their promiſes, and the confidence of their predictions they far outdo all the boaſting of empiricks. The arrogance of their pretenſions, in a manner provokes, and challenges us to an inquiry into their foundation.

I am convinced that there are men of conſider-

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able parts among the popular leaders in the national aſſembly. Some of them diſplay eloquence in their ſpeeches and their writings. This cannot be without powerful and cultivated talents. But eloquence may exiſt without a proportionable degree of wiſdom. When I ſpeak of ability, I am obliged to diſtinguiſh. What they have done towards the ſupport of their ſyſtem beſpeaks no ordinary men. In the ſyſtem itſelf, taken as the ſcheme of a republick conſtructed for procuring the proſperity and ſecurity of the citizen, and for promoting the ſtrength and grandeur of the ſtate, I confeſs myſelf unable to find out any thing which diſplays, in a ſingle inſtance, the work of a comprehenſive and diſpoſing mind, or even the proviſions of a vulgar prudence. Their purpoſe every where ſeems to have been to evade and ſlip aſide from *difficulty*. This it has been the glory of the great maſters in all the arts to confront, and to overcome; and when they had overcome the firſt difficulty, to turn it into an inſtrument for new conqueſts over new difficulties; thus to enable them to extend the empire of their ſcience; and even to puſh forward beyond the reach of their original thoughts, the land-marks of the human underſtanding itſelf. Difficulty is a ſevere inſtructor, ſet over us by the ſupreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legiſlator who knows us better

ter than we know ourſelves, as he loves us better too. *Pater ipſe colendi haud facilem eſſe viam voluit.* He that wreſtles with us ſtrengthens our nerves, and ſharpens our ſkill. Our antagoniſt is our helper. This amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to conſider it in all its relations. It will not ſuffer us to be ſuperficial. It is the want of nerves of underſtanding for ſuch a taſk; it is the degenerate fondneſs for tricking ſhort-cuts, and little fallacious facilities, that has in ſo many parts of the world created governments with arbitrary powers. They have created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republick of Paris. With them defects in wiſdom are to be ſupplied by the plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labours on a principle of ſloth, they have the common fortune of ſlothful men. The difficulties which they rather had eluded than eſcaped, meet them again in their courſe; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confuſed detail, in an induſtry without limit, and without direction; and, in concluſion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious, and inſecure.

It is this inability to wreſtle with difficulty which has obliged the arbitrary aſſembly of France to

to commence their ſchemes of reform with aboli-tion and total deſtruction *. But is it in deſtroy-ing and pulling down that ſkill is diſplayed? Your mob can do this as well at leaſt as your aſſem-blies. The ſhalloweſt underſtanding, the rudeſt hand is more than equal to that taſk. Rage and phrenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foreſight can build up in an hundred years. The errours and defects of old eſtabliſhments are viſible and pal-pable. It calls for little ability to point them out; and where abſolute power is given, it requires but a word wholly to aboliſh the vice and the eſ-tabliſhment together. The ſame lazy but reſtleſs diſpoſition which loves ſloth and hates quiet, di-rects theſe politicians, when they come to work,

* A leading member of the aſſembly, M. Rabaud de St. Etienne, has expreſſed the principle of all their proceedings as clearly as poſſible.—Nothing can be more ſimple:—"*Tous les "établiſſemens en France couronnent le malheur du peuple: pour le "rendres heureux il faut le rénouveler; changer ſes idées; changer "ſes loix; changer ſes mœurs; ..... changer les hommes; changer "les choſes; changer les mots ..... tout détruire; oui, tout dé-"truire; puiſque tout eſt à recréer.*" This gentleman was choſen preſident in an aſſembly not ſitting at *Quinze-vingt*, or the *Petits Maiſons*; and compoſed of perſons giving themſelves out to be rational beings; but neither his ideas, language, or conduct, differ in the ſmalleſt degree from the diſcourſes, opinions, and actions of thoſe within and without the aſſembly, who direct the operations of the machine now at work in France.

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for ſupplying the place of what they have deſtroyed. To make every thing the reverſe of what they have ſeen is quite as eaſy as to deſtroy. No difficulties occur in what has never been tried. Criticiſm is almoſt baffled in diſcovering the defects of what has not exiſted; and eager enthuſiaſm, and cheating hope have all the wild field of imagination in which they may expatiate with little or no oppoſition.

At once to preſerve and to reform is quite another thing. When the uſeful parts of an old eſtabliſhment are kept, and what is ſuperadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, ſteady perſevering attention, various powers of compariſon and combination, and the reſources of an underſtanding fruitful in expedients, are to be exerciſed; they are to be exerciſed in a continued conflict with the combined force of oppoſite vices; with the obſtinacy that rejects all improvement, and the levity that is fatigued and diſguſted with every thing of which it is in poſſeſſion. But you may object—"A proceſs of this kind is ſlow. It "is not fit for an aſſembly, which glories in per-"forming in a few months the work of ages. "Such a mode of reforming, poſſibly might take "up many years." Without queſtion it might; and it ought. It is one of the excellencies of a method in which time is amongſt the aſſiſtants, that its operation is ſlow, and in ſome caſes almoſt

imperceptible. If circumſpection and caution are a part of wiſdom, when we work only upon inanimate matter, ſurely they become a part of duty too, when the ſubject of our demolition and conſtruction is not brick and timber, but ſentient beings, by the ſudden alteration of whoſe ſtate, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miſerable. But it ſeems as if it were the prevalent opinion in Paris, that an unfeeling heart, and an undoubting confidence, are the ſole qualifications for a perfect legiſlator. Far different are my ideas of that high office. The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of ſenſibility. He ought to love and reſpect his kind, and to fear himſelf. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance; but his movements towards it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for ſocial ends, is to be only wrought by ſocial means. There mind muſt conſpire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of minds which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force. If I might venture to appeal to what is ſo much out of faſhion in Paris, I mean to experience, I ſhould tell you, that in my courſe I have known, and, according to my meaſure, have co-operated with great men; and I have never yet ſeen any plan which has not been mended by the obſervations of thoſe who

were much inferiour in underſtanding to the perſon who took the lead in the buſineſs. By a ſlow but well-ſuſtained progreſs, the effect of each ſtep is watched; the good or ill ſucceſs of the firſt, gives light to us in the ſecond; and ſo, from light to light, we are conducted with ſafety through the whole ſeries. We ſee that the parts of the ſyſtem do not clash. The evils latent in the moſt promiſing contrivances are provided for as they ariſe. One advantage is as little as poſſible ſacrificed to another. We compenſate, we reconcile, we balance. We are enabled to unite into a conſiſtent whole the various anomalies and contending principles that are found in the minds and affairs of men. From hence ariſes, not an excellence in ſimplicity, but one far ſuperiour, an excellence in compoſition. Where the great intereſts of mankind are concerned through a long ſucceſſion of generations, that ſucceſſion ought to be admitted into ſome ſhare in the councils which are ſo deeply to affect them. If juſtice requires this, the work itſelf requires the aid of more minds than one age can furniſh. It is from this view of things that the beſt legiſlators have been often ſatisfied with the eſtabliſhment of ſome ſure, ſolid, and ruling principle in government; a power like that which ſome of the philoſophers have called a plaſtick nature; and having fixed the principle, they have left it afterwards to its own operation.

To

To proceed in this manner, that is, to proceed with a preſiding principle, and a prolifick energy, is with me the criterion of profound wiſdom. What your politicians think the marks of a bold, hardy genius, are only proofs of a deplorable want of ability. By their violent haſte, and their defiance of the proceſs of nature, they are delivered over blindly to every projector and adventurer, to every alchymiſt and empirick. They deſpair of turning to account any thing that is common. Diet is nothing in their ſyſtem of remedy. The worſt of it is, that this their deſpair of curing common diſtempers by regular methods, ariſes not only from defect of comprehenſion, but, I fear, from ſome malignity of diſpoſition. Your legiſlators ſeem to have taken their opinions of all profeſſions, ranks, and offices, from the declamations and buffooneries of ſatiriſts; who would themſelves be aſtoniſhed if they were held to the letter of their own deſcriptions. By liſtening only to theſe, your leaders regard all things only on the ſide of their vices and faults, and view thoſe vices and faults under every colour of exaggeration. It is undoubtedly true, though it may ſeem paradoxical; but in general, thoſe who are habitually employed in finding and diſplaying faults, are unqualified for the work of reformation: becauſe their minds are not only unfurniſhed with patterns of the fair and good, but by habit they come to take

no delight in the contemplation of thoſe things. By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little. It is therefore not wonderful, that they ſhould be indiſpoſed and unable to ſerve them. From hence ariſes the complexional diſpoſition of ſome of your guides to pull every thing in pieces. At this malicious game they diſplay the whole of their *quadrimanous* activity. As to the reſt, the paradoxes of eloquent writers, brought forth purely as a ſport of fancy, to try their talents, to rouze attention, and excite ſurpriſe, are taken up by theſe gentlemen, not in the ſpirit of the original authors, as means of cultivating their taſte and improving their ſtyle. Theſe paradoxes become with them ſerious grounds of action, upon which they proceed in regulating the moſt important concerns of the ſtate. Cicero ludicrouſly deſcribes Cato as endeavouring to act in the commonwealth upon the ſchool paradoxes which exerciſed the wits of the junior ſtudents in the ſtoick philoſophy. If this was true of Cato, theſe gentlemen copy after him in the manner of ſome perſons who lived about his time—*pede nudo Catonem.* Mr. Hume told me, that he had from Rouſſeau himſelf the ſecret of his principles of compoſition. That acute, though eccentrick obſerver, had perceived, that to ſtrike and intereſt the publick, the marvellous muſt be produced; that the marvellous of the heathen mythology had long ſince loſt

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its effect; that giants, magicians, fairies, and heroes of romance which ſucceeded, had exhauſted the portion of credulity which belonged to their age; that now nothing was left to a writer but that ſpecies of the marvellous, which might ſtill be produced, and with as great an effect as ever, though in another way; that is, the marvellous in life, in manners, in characters, and in extraordinary ſituations, giving riſe to new and unlooked-for ſtrokes in politicks and morals. I believe, that were Rouſſeau alive, and in one of his lucid intervals, he would be ſhocked at the practical phrenzy of his ſcholars, who in their paradoxes are ſervile imitators; and even in their incredulity diſcover an implicit faith.

Men who undertake conſiderable things, even in a regular way, ought to give us ground to preſume ability. But the phyſician of the ſtate, who, not ſatisfied with the cure of diſtempers, undertakes to regenerate conſtitutions, ought to ſhew uncommon powers. Some very unuſual appearances of wiſdom ought to diſplay themſelves on the face of the deſigns of thoſe who appeal to no practice, and who copy after no model. Has any ſuch been manifeſted? I ſhall take a view (it ſhall for the ſubject be a very ſhort one) of what the aſſembly has done, with regard, firſt, to the conſtitution of the legiſlature; in the next place, to that of the executive power; then to that of the judicature; afterwards to the model of the army;

and conclude with the ſyſtem of finance, to ſee whether we can diſcover in any part of their ſchemes the portentous ability, which may juſtify theſe bold undertakers in the ſuperiority which they aſſume over mankind.

It is in the model of the ſovereign and preſiding part of this new republick, that we ſhould expect their grand diſplay. Here they were to prove their title to their proud demands. For the plan itſelf at large, and for the reaſons on which it is grounded, I refer to the journals of the aſſembly of the 29th of September 1789, and to the ſubſequent proceedings which have made any alterations in the plan. So far as in a matter ſomewhat confuſed I can ſee light, the ſyſtem remains ſubſtantially as it has been originally framed. My few remarks will be ſuch as regard its ſpirit, its tendency, and its fitneſs for framing a popular commonwealth, which they profeſs theirs to be, ſuited to the ends for which any commonwealth, and particularly ſuch a commonwealth, is made. At the ſame time I mean to conſider its conſiſtency with itſelf and its own principles.

Old eſtabliſhments are tried by their effects. If the people are happy, united, wealthy, and powerful, we preſume the reſt. We conclude that to be good from whence good is derived. In old eſtabliſhments various correctives have been found for their aberrations from theory. Indeed they are the reſults of various neceſſities and expe-

diences,

diences. They are not often conſtructed after any theory; theories are rather drawn from them. In them we often ſee the end beſt obtained, where the means ſeem not perfectly reconcileable to what we may fancy was the original ſcheme. The means taught by experience may be better ſuited to political ends than thoſe contrived in the original project. They again re-act upon the primitive conſtitution, and ſometimes improve the deſign itſelf from which they ſeem to have departed. I think all this might be curiouſly exemplified in the Britiſh conſtitution. At worſt, the errours and deviations of every kind in reckoning are found and computed, and the ſhip proceeds in her courſe. This is the caſe of old eſtabliſhments; but in a new and merely theoretick ſyſtem, it is expected that every contrivance ſhall appear, on the face of it, to anſwer its ends; eſpecially where the projectors are no way embarraſſed with an endeavour to accommodate the new building to an old one, either in the walls or on the foundations.

The French builders, clearing away as mere rubbiſh whatever they found, and, like their ornamental gardeners, forming every thing into an exact level, propoſe to reſt the whole local and general legiſlature on three baſes of three different kinds; one geometrical, one arithmetical, and the third financial; the firſt of which they call the *baſis of territory*; the ſecond, the *baſis of population*;

and the third, the *baſis of contribution.* For the accompliſhment of the firſt of theſe purpoſes, they divide the area of their country into eighty-three pieces, regularly ſquare, of eighteen leagues by eighteen. Theſe large diviſions are called *Departments.* Theſe they portion, proceeding by ſquare meaſurement, into ſeventeen hundred and twenty diſtricts, called *Communes.* Theſe again they ſubdivide, ſtill proceeding by ſquare meaſurement, into ſmaller diſtricts called *Cantons,* making in all 6,400.

At firſt view this geometrical baſis of theirs preſents not much to admire or to blame. It calls for no great legiſlative talents. Nothing more than an accurate land ſurveyor, with his chain, ſight, and theodolite, is requiſite for ſuch a plan as this. In the old diviſions of the country, various accidents at various times, and the ebb and flow of various properties and juriſdictions, ſettled their bounds. Theſe bounds were not made upon any fixed ſyſtem undoubtedly. They were ſubject to ſome inconveniencies; but they were inconveniencies for which uſe had found remedies, and habit had ſupplied accommodation and patience. In this new pavement of ſquare within ſquare, and this organiſation, and ſemi-organiſation made on the ſyſtem of Empedocles and Buffon, and not upon any politick principle, it is impoſſible that innumerable local inconveniencies, to which men are not habituated, muſt not ariſe. But theſe I

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paſs over, becauſe it requires an accurate knowledge of the country, which I do not poſſeſs, to ſpecify them.

When theſe ſtate ſurveyors came to take a view of their work of meaſurement, they ſoon found, that in politicks the moſt fallacious of all things was geometrical demonſtration. They had then recourſe to another baſis (or rather buttreſs) to ſupport the building, which tottered on that falſe foundation. It was evident, that the goodneſs of the ſoil, the number of the people, their wealth, and the largeneſs of their contribution, made ſuch infinite variations between ſquare and ſquare as to render menſuration a ridiculous ſtandard of power in the commonwealth, and equality in geometry the moſt unequal of all meaſures in the diſtribution of men. However, they could not give it up. But dividing their political and civil repreſentation into three parts, they allotted one of thoſe parts to the ſquare meaſurement, without a ſingle fact or calculation to aſcertain whether this territorial proportion of repreſentation was fairly aſſigned, and ought upon any principle really to be a third. Having however given to geometry this portion (of a third for her dower) out of compliment I ſuppoſe to that ſublime ſcience, they left the other two to be ſcuffled for between the other parts, population and contribution.

When they came to provide for population,

they were not able to proceed quite ſo ſmoothly as they had done in the field of their geometry. Here their arithmetick came to bear upon their juridical metaphyſicks. Had they ſtuck to their metaphyſick principles, the arithmetical proceſs would be ſimple indeed. Men, with them, are ſtrictly equal, and are entitled to equal rights in their own government. Each head, on this ſyſtem, would have its vote, and every man would vote directly for the perſon who was to repreſent him in the legiſlature. "But ſoft—by regular "degrees, not yet." This metaphyſick principle, to which law, cuſtom, uſage, policy, reaſon, were to yield, is to yield itſelf to their pleaſure. There muſt be many degrees, and ſome ſtages, before the repreſentative can come in contact with his conſtituent. Indeed, as we ſhall ſoon ſee, theſe two perſons are to have no ſort of communion with each other. Firſt, the voters in the *Canton*, who compoſe what they call *primary aſſemblies*, are to have a *qualification*. What! a qualification on the indefeaſible rights of men? Yes; but it ſhall be a very ſmall qualification. Our injuſtice ſhall be very little oppreſſive; only the local valuation of three days labour paid to the publick. Why, this is not much, I readily admit, for any thing but the utter ſubverſion of your equalizing principle. As a qualification it might as well be let alone; for it anſwers no one purpoſe for which qualifi-

cations

cations are eſtabliſhed; and, on your ideas, it excludes from a vote, the man of all others whoſe natural equality ſtands the moſt in need of protection and defence: I mean the man who has nothing elſe but his natural equality to guard him. You order him to buy the right, which you before told him nature had given to him gratuitouſly at his birth, and of which no authority on earth could lawfully deprive him. With regard to the perſon who cannot come up to your market, a tyrannous ariſtocracy, as againſt him, is eſtabliſhed at the very outſet, by you who pretend to be its ſworn foe.

The gradation proceeds. Theſe primary aſſemblies of the *Canton* elect deputies to the *Commune;* one for every two hundred qualified inhabitants. Here is the firſt medium put between the primary elector and the repreſentative legiſlator; and here a new turnpike is fixed for taxing the rights of men with a ſecond qualification: for none can be elected into the *Commune* who does not pay the amount of ten days labour. Nor have we yet done. There is ſtill to be another gradation *. Theſe

* The aſſembly, in executing the plan of their committee, made ſome alterations. They have ſtruck out one ſtage in theſe gradations; this removes a part of the objection; but the main objection, namely, that in their ſcheme the firſt conſtituent voter has no connection with the repreſentative legiſlator, remains in all its force. There are other alterations, ſome

Theſe *Communes*, choſen by the *Canton*, chooſe to the *Department*; and the deputies of the *Department* chooſe their deputies to the *National Aſſembly*. Here is a third barrier of a ſenſeleſs qualification. Every deputy to the national aſſembly muſt pay, in direct contribution, to the value of a *mark of ſilver*. Of all theſe qualifying barriers we muſt think alike; that they are impotent to ſecure independence; ſtrong only to deſtroy the rights of men.

In all this proceſs, which in its fundamental elements affects to conſider only *population* upon a principle of natural right, there is a manifeſt attention to *property*; which, however juſt and reaſonable on other ſchemes, is on theirs perfectly unſupportable.

When they come to their third baſis, that of *Contribution*, we find that they have more completely loſt ſight of the rights of men. This laſt baſis reſts *entirely* on property. A principle totally different from the equality of men, and utterly irreconcileable to it, is thereby admitted; but no ſooner is this principle admitted, than (as uſual) it is ſubverted; and it is not ſubverted (as we ſhall preſently ſee) to approximate the inequality of riches to the level of nature. The additional

ſome poſſibly for the better, ſome certainly for the worſe; but to the author the merit or demerit of theſe ſmaller alterations appears to be of no moment, where the ſcheme itſelf is fundamentally vicious and abſurd.

ſhare

ſhare in the third portion of repreſentation (a portion reſerved excluſively for the higher contribution) is made to regard the *diſtrict* only, and not the individuals in it who pay. It is eaſy to perceive, by the courſe of their reaſonings, how much they were embarraſſed by their contradictory ideas of the rights of men and the privileges of riches. The committee of conſtitution do as good as admit that they are wholly irreconcileable. "The "relation with regard to the contributions, is "without doubt *null* (ſay they) when the queſ- "tion is on the balance of the political rights as "between individual and individual; without "which *perſonal equality would be deſtroyed*, and "*an ariſtocracy of the rich* would be eſtabliſhed. "But this inconvenience entirely diſappears when "the proportional relation of the contribution is "only conſidered in the *great maſſes*, and is ſolely "between province and province; it ſerves in that "caſe only to form a juſt reciprocal proportion "between the cities, without affecting the perſonal "rights of the citizens."

Here the principle of *contribution*, as taken between man and man, is reprobated as *null*, and deſtructive to equality; and as pernicious too; becauſe it leads to the eſtabliſhment of an *ariſtocracy of the rich*. However, it muſt not be abandoned. And the way of getting rid of the difficulty is to eſtabliſh the inequality as between department

partment and department, leaving all the individuals in each department upon an exact par. Obſerve, that this parity between individuals had been before deſtroyed when the qualifications within the departments were ſettled; nor does it ſeem a matter of great importance whether the equality of men be injured by maſſes or individually. An individual is not of the ſame importance in a maſs repreſented by a few, as in a maſs repreſented by many. It would be too much to tell a man jealous of his equality, that the elector has the ſame franchiſe who votes for three members as he who votes for ten.

Now take it in the other point of view, and let us ſuppoſe their principle of repreſentation according to contribution, that is according to riches, to be well imagined, and to be a neceſſary baſis for their republick. In this their third baſis they aſſume, that riches ought to be reſpected, and that juſtice and policy require that they ſhould entitle men, in ſome mode or other, to a larger ſhare in the adminiſtration of publick affairs; it is now to be ſeen how the aſſembly provides for the pre-eminence, or even for the ſecurity of the rich, by conferring, in virtue of their opulence, that larger meaſure of power to their diſtrict which is denied to them perſonally. I readily admit (indeed I ſhould lay it down as a fundamental principle) that in a republican government, which has a democratick

mocratick baſis, the rich do require an additional ſecurity above what is neceſſary to them in monarchies. They are ſubject to envy, and through envy to oppreſſion. On the preſent ſcheme it is impoſſible to divine what advantage they derive from the ariſtocratick preference upon which the unequal repreſentation of the maſſes is founded. The rich cannot feel it, either as a ſupport to dignity, or as ſecurity to fortune: for the ariſtocratick maſs is generated from purely democratick principles; and the prevalence given to it in the general repreſentation has no ſort of reference to, or connection with, the perſons, upon account of whoſe property this ſuperiority of the maſs is eſtabliſhed. If the contrivers of this ſcheme meant any ſort of favour to the rich, in conſequence of their contribution, they ought to have conferred the privilege either on the individual rich, or on ſome claſs formed of rich perſons (as hiſtorians repreſent Servius Tullius to have done in the early conſtitution of Rome); becauſe the conteſt between the rich and the poor is not a ſtruggle between corporation and corporation, but a conteſt between men and men; a competition not between diſtricts, but between deſcriptions. It would anſwer its purpoſe better if the ſcheme were inverted; that the votes of the maſſes were rendered equal; and that the votes within each maſs were proportioned to property.

Let us ſuppoſe one man in a diſtrict (it is an eaſy ſuppoſition) to contribute as much as an hundred of his neighbours. Againſt theſe he has but one vote. If there were but one repreſentative for the maſs, his poor neighbours would outvote him by an hundred to one for that ſingle repreſentative. Bad enough. But amends are to be made him. How? The diſtrict, in virtue of his wealth, is to chooſe, ſay ten members inſtead of one: that is to ſay, by paying a very large contribution he has the happineſs of being outvoted, an hundred to one, by the poor, for ten repreſentatives, inſtead of being outvoted exactly in the ſame proportion for a ſingle member. In truth, inſtead of benefiting by this ſuperiour quantity of repreſentation, the rich man is ſubjected to an additional hardſhip. The increaſe of repreſentation within his province ſets up nine perſons more, and as many more than nine as there may be democratick candidates, to cabal and intrigue, and to flatter the people at his expence and to his oppreſſion. An intereſt is by this means held out to multitudes of the inferiour ſort, in obtaining a ſalary of eighteen livres a day (to them a vaſt object) beſides the pleaſure of a reſidence in Paris, and their ſhare in the government of the kingdom. The more the objects of ambition are multiplied and become democratick, juſt in that proportion the rich are endangered.

Thus

Thus it muſt fare between the poor and the rich in the province deemed ariſtocratick, which in its internal relation is the very reverſe of that character. In its external relation, that is, in its relation to the other provinces, I cannot ſee how the unequal repreſentation, which is given to maſſes on account of wealth, becomes the means of preſerving the equipoiſe and the tranquillity of the commonwealth. For if it be one of the objects to ſecure the weak from being cruſhed by the ſtrong (as in all ſociety undoubtedly it is) how are the ſmaller and poorer of theſe maſſes to be ſaved from the tyranny of the more wealthy? Is it by adding to the wealthy further and more ſyſtematical means of oppreſſing them? When we come to a balance of repreſentation between corporate bodies, provincial intereſts, emulations, and jealouſies, are full as likely to ariſe among them as among individuals; and their diviſions are likely to produce a much hotter ſpirit of diſſention, and ſomething leading much more nearly to a war.

I ſee that theſe ariſtocratick maſſes are made upon what is called the principle of direct contribution. Nothing can be a more unequal ſtandard than this. The indirect contribution, that which ariſes from duties on conſumption, is in truth a better ſtandard, and follows and diſcovers wealth more naturally than this of direct contribution.

It is difficult indeed to fix a ſtandard of local preference on account of the one, or of the other, or of both, becauſe ſome provinces may pay the more of either or of both, on account of cauſes not intrinſick, but originating from thoſe very diſtricts over whom they have obtained a preference in conſequence of their oſtenſible contribution. If the maſſes were independent ſovereign bodies, who were to provide for a federative treaſury by diſtinct contingents, and that the revenue had not (as it has) many impoſitions running through the whole, which affect men individually, and not corporately, and which, by their nature, confound all territorial limits, ſomething might be ſaid for the baſis of contribution as founded on maſſes. But of all things, this repreſentation, to be meaſured by contribution, is the moſt difficult to ſettle upon principles of equity in a country, which conſiders its diſtricts as members of a whole. For a great city, ſuch as Bourdeaux or Paris, appears to pay a vaſt body of duties, almoſt out of all aſſignable proportion to other places, and its maſs is conſidered accordingly. But are theſe cities the true contributors in that proportion? No. The conſumers of the commodities imported into Bourdeaux, who are ſcattered through all France, pay the import duties of Bourdeaux. The produce of the vintage in Guienne and Languedoc give to that city the means

means of its contribution growing out of an export commerce. The landholders who ſpend their eſtates in Paris, and are thereby the creators of that city, contribute for Paris from the provinces out of which their revenues ariſe. Very nearly the ſame arguments will apply to the repreſentative ſhare given on account of *direct* contribution: becauſe the direct contribution muſt be aſſeſſed on wealth real or preſumed; and that local wealth will itſelf ariſe from cauſes not local, and which therefore in equity ought not to produce a local preference.

It is very remarkable, that in this fundamental regulation, which ſettles the repreſentation of the maſs upon the direct contribution, they have not yet ſettled how that direct contribution ſhall be laid, and how apportioned. Perhaps there is ſome latent policy towards the continuance of the preſent aſſembly in this ſtrange procedure. However, until they do this, they can have no certain conſtitution. It muſt depend at laſt upon the ſyſtem of taxation, and muſt vary with every variation in that ſyſtem. As they have contrived matters, their taxation does not ſo much depend on their conſtitution, as their conſtitution on their taxation. This muſt introduce great confuſion among the maſſes; as the variable qualification for votes within the diſtrict muſt, if ever real conteſted elections take place, cauſe infinite internal controverſies.

To compare together the three baſes, not on their political reaſon, but on the ideas on which the aſſembly works, and to try its conſiſtency with itſelf, we cannot avoid obſerving, that the principle which the committee call the baſis of *population*, does not begin to operate from the ſame point with the two other principles called the baſes of *territory* and of *contribution*, which are both of an ariſtocratick nature. The conſequence is, that where all three begin to operate together, there is the moſt abſurd inequality produced by the operation of the former on the two latter principles. Every canton contains four ſquare leagues, and is eſtimated to contain, on the average, 4,000 inhabitants, or 680 voters in the *primary aſſemblies*, which vary in numbers with the population of the canton, and ſend *one deputy* to the *commune* for every 200 voters. *Nine cantons* make a *commune*.

Now let us take *a canton* containing *a ſea-port town of trade*, or *a great manufacturing town*. Let us ſuppoſe the population of this canton to be 12,700 inhabitants, or 2,193 voters, forming *three primary aſſemblies*, and ſending *ten deputies* to the *commune*.

Oppoſe to this *one* canton *two* others of the remaining eight in the ſame commune. Theſe we may ſuppoſe to have their fair population of 4,000 inhabitants, and 680 voters each, or 8,000 inhabitants and 1,360 voters, both together. Theſe will

form only *two primary aſſemblies*, and ſend only *ſix* deputies to the *commune*.

When the aſſembly of the *commune* comes to vote on the *baſis of territory*, which principle is firſt admitted to operate in that aſſembly, the *ſingle canton* which has *half* the territory of the *other two*, will have *ten* voices to *ſix* in the election of *three deputies* to the aſſembly of the department, choſen on the expreſs ground of a repreſentation of territory. This inequality, ſtriking as it is, will be yet highly aggravated, if we ſuppoſe, as we fairly may, the *ſeveral* other cantons of the *commune* to fall proportionably ſhort of the average population, as much as the *principal canton* exceeds it.

Now as to *the baſis of contribution*, which alſo is a principle admitted firſt to operate in the aſſembly of the *commune*. Let us again take *one* canton, ſuch as is ſtated above. If the whole of the direct contributions paid by a great trading or manufacturing town be divided equally among the inhabitants, each individual will be found to pay much more than an individual living in the country according to the ſame average. The whole paid by the inhabitants of the former will be more than the whole paid by the inhabitants of the latter —we may fairly aſſume one-third more. Then the 12,700 inhabitants, or 2,193 voters of the canton will pay as much as 19,050 inhabitants, or

3,289 voters of the *other cantons*, which are nearly the eſtimated proportion of inhabitants and voters of *five* other cantons. Now the 2,193 votes will, as I before ſaid, ſend only *ten* deputies to the aſſembly; the 3,289 voters will ſend *ſixteen*. Thus, for an *equal* ſhare in the contribution of the whole *commune*, there will be a difference of *ſixteen* voices to *ten* in voting for deputies to be choſen on the principle of repreſenting the general contribution of the whole *commune*.

By the ſame mode of computation we ſhall find 15,875 inhabitants, or 2,741 voters of the *other* cantons, who pay *one-ſixth* LESS to the contribution of the whole *commune*, will have *three* voices MORE than the 12,700 inhabitants, or 2,193 voters of the *one* canton.

Such is the fantaſtical and unjuſt inequality between maſs and maſs, in this curious repartition of the rights of repreſentation ariſing out of *territory* and *contribution*. The qualifications which theſe confer are in truth negative qualifications, that give a right in an inverſe proportion to the poſſeſſion of them.

In this whole contrivance of the three baſes, conſider it in any light you pleaſe, I do not ſee a variety of objects, reconciled in one conſiſtent whole, but ſeveral contradictory principles reluctantly and irreconcileably brought and held together by your philoſophers, like wild beaſts ſhut up

in

in a cage, to claw and bite each other to their mutual deſtruction.

I am afraid I have gone too far into their way of conſidering the formation of a conſtitution. They have much, but bad, metaphyſicks; much, but bad, geometry; much, but falſe, proportionate arithmetick; but if it were all as exact as metaphyſicks, geometry, and arithmetick ought to be, and if their ſchemes were perfectly conſiſtent in all their parts, it would make only a more fair and ſightly viſion. It is remarkable, that in a great arrangement of mankind, not one reference whatſoever is to be found to any thing moral or any thing politick; nothing that relates to the concerns, the actions, the paſſions, the intereſts of men. *Hominem non ſapiunt.*

You ſee I only conſider this conſtitution as electoral, and leading by ſteps to the national aſſembly. I do not enter into the internal government of the departments, and their genealogy through the communes and cantons. Theſe local governments are, in the original plan, to be as nearly as poſſible compoſed in the ſame manner and on the ſame principles with the elective aſſemblies. They are each of them bodies perfectly compact and rounded in themſelves.

You cannot but perceive in this ſcheme, that it has a direct and immediate tendency to ſever France into a variety of republicks, and to render them

totally independent of each other, without any direct conſtitutional means of coherence, connection, or ſubordination, except what may be derived from their acquieſcence in the determinations of the general congreſs of the ambaſſadors from each independent republick. Such in reality is the national aſſembly, and ſuch governments I admit do exiſt in the world, though in forms infinitely more ſuitable to the local and habitual circumſtances of their people. But ſuch aſſociations, rather than bodies politick, have generally been the effect of neceſſity, not choice; and I believe the preſent French power is the very firſt body of citizens, who, having obtained full authority to do with their country what they pleaſed, have choſen to diſſever it in this barbarous manner.

It is impoſſible not to obſerve, that in the ſpirit of this geometrical diſtribution, and arithmetical arrangement, theſe pretended citizens treat France exactly like a country of conqueſt. Acting as conquerors, they have imitated the policy of the harſheſt of that harſh race. The policy of ſuch barbarous victors, who contemn a ſubdued people, and inſult their feelings, has ever been, as much as in them lay, to deſtroy all veſtiges of the ancient country, in religion, in polity, in laws and in manners; to confound all territorial limits; to produce a general poverty; to put up their properties to auction; to cruſh their princes, nobles, and pontiffs;

tiffs; to lay low every thing which had lifted its head above the level, or which could ſerve to combine or rally, in their diſtreſſes, the diſbanded people, under the ſtandard of old opinion. They have made France free in the manner in which thoſe ſincere friends to the rights of mankind, the Romans, freed Greece, Macedon, and other nations. They deſtroyed the bonds of their union, under colour of providing for the independence of each of their cities.

When the members who compoſe theſe new bodies of cantons, communes, and departments, arrangements purpoſely produced through the medium of confuſion, begin to act, they will find themſelves, in a great meaſure, ſtrangers to one another. The electors and elected throughout, eſpecially in the rural *cantons*, will be frequently without any civil habitudes or connections, or any of that natural diſcipline which is the ſoul of a true republick. Magiſtrates and collectors of revenue are now no longer acquainted with their diſtricts, biſhops with their dioceſes, or curates with their pariſhes. Theſe new colonies of the rights of men bear a ſtrong reſemblance to that ſort of military colonies which Tacitus has obſerved upon in the declining policy of Rome. In better and wiſer days (whatever courſe they took with foreign nations) they were careful to make the elements of a methodical ſubordination and ſettle-

ſettlement to be coeval; and even to lay the foundations of diſcipline in the military *. But, when all the good arts had fallen into ruin, they proceeded, as your aſſembly does, upon the equality of men, and with as little judgment, and as little care for thoſe things which make a republick tolerable or durable. But in this, as well as almoſt every inſtance, your new commonwealth is born, and bred, and fed, in thoſe corruptions which mark degenerated and worn-out republicks. Your child comes into the world with the ſymptoms of death; the *facies Hippocratica* forms the character of its phyſiognomy, and the prognoſtick of its fate.

The legiſlators, who framed the ancient republicks knew that their buſineſs was too arduous to be accompliſhed with no better apparatus than the metaphyſicks of an under graduate, and the mathematicks and arithmetick of an exciſeman. They had to do with men, and they were obliged to ſtudy human nature. They had to do with

* Non, ut olim, univerſæ legiones deducebantur cum tribunis, et centurionibus, et ſui cujuſque ordinis militibus, ut conſenſu et caritate rempublicam afficerent; ſed ignoti inter ſe, diverſis manipulis, ſine rectore, ſine affectibus mutuis, quaſi ex alio genere mortalium, repente in unum collecti, numerus magis quam colonia. Tac. Annal. l. 14. ſect. 27. All this will be ſtill more applicable to the unconnected, rotatory, biennial national aſſemblies, in this abſurd and ſenſeleſs conſtitution.

citizens,

citizens, and they were obliged to ſtudy the effects of thoſe habits which are communicated by the circumſtances of civil life. They were ſenſible that the operation of this ſecond nature on the firſt produced a new combination; and thence aroſe many diverſities amongſt men, according to their birth, their education, their profeſſions, the periods of their lives, their reſidence in towns or in the country, their ſeveral ways of acquiring and of fixing property, and according to the quality of the property itſelf, all which rendered them as it were ſo many different ſpecies of animals. From hence they thought themſelves obliged to diſpoſe their citizens into ſuch claſſes, and to place them in ſuch ſituations in the ſtate as their peculiar habits might qualify them to fill, and to allot to them ſuch appropriated privileges as might ſecure to them what their ſpecifick occaſions required, and which might furniſh to each deſcription ſuch force as might protect it in the conflict cauſed by the diverſity of intereſts, that muſt exiſt, and muſt contend, in all complex ſociety: for the legiſlator would have been aſhamed, that the coarſe huſbandman ſhould well know how to aſſort and to uſe his ſheep, horſes, and oxen, and ſhould have enough of common ſenſe not to abſtract and equalize them all into animals, without providing for each kind an appropriate food, care, and employment; whilſt he, the œconomiſt, diſpoſer and ſhepherd of his own kindred, ſubliming himſelf into

into an airy metaphyſician, was reſolved to know nothing of his flocks but as men in general. It is for this reaſon that Monteſquieu obſerved very juſtly, that in their claſſification of the citizens, the great legiſlators of antiquity made the greateſt diſplay of their powers, and even ſoared above themſelves. It is here that your modern legiſlators have gone deep into the negative ſcries, and ſunk even below their own nothing. As the firſt ſort of legiſlators attended to the different kinds of citizens, and combined them into one commonwealth, the others, the metaphyſical and alchemiſtical legiſlators, have taken the direct contrary courſe. They have attempted to confound all ſorts of citizens, as well as they could, into one homogeneous maſs; and then they divided this their amalgama into a number of incoherent repùblicks. They reduce men to looſe counters, merely for the ſake of ſimple telling, and not to figures whoſe power is to ariſe from their place in the table. The elements of their own metaphyſicks might have taught them better leſſons. The troll of their categorical table might have informed them that there was ſomething elſe in the intellectual world beſides *ſubſtance* and *quantity*. They might learn from the catechiſm of metaphyſicks that there were eight heads more *, in every complex deliberation, which they have never thought

* Qualitas, Relatio, Actio, Paſſio, Ubi, Quando, Situs, Habitus.

of,

of, though theſe, of all the ten, are the ſubject on which the ſkill of man can operate any thing at all.

So far from this able diſpoſition of ſome of the old republican legiſlators, which follows with a ſolicitous accuracy the moral conditions and propenſities of men, they have levelled and cruſhed together all the orders which they found, even under the coarſe unartificial arrangement of the monarchy, in which mode of government the claſſing of the citizens is not of ſo much importance as in a republick. It is true, however, that every ſuch claſſification, if properly ordered, is good in all forms of government; and compoſes a ſtrong barrier againſt the exceſſes of deſpotiſm, as well as it is the neceſſary means of giving effect and permanence to a republick. For want of ſomething of this kind, if the preſent project of a republick ſhould fail, all ſecurities to a moderated freedom fail along with it; all the indirect reſtraints which mitigate deſpotiſm are removed; inſomuch that if monarchy ſhould ever again obtain an intire aſcendency in France, under this or under any other dynaſty, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at ſetting out, by the wiſe and virtuous counſels of the prince, the moſt completely arbitrary power that has ever appeared on earth. This is to play a moſt deſperate game.

The

. The confuſion which attends on all ſuch proceedings, they even declare to be one of their objects, and they hope to ſecure their conſtitution by a terrour of a return of thoſe evils which attended their making it. "By this," ſay they, "its "deſtruction will become difficult to authority, "which cannot break it up without the intire "diſorganization of the whole ſtate." They preſume, that if this authority ſhould ever come to the ſame degree of power that they have acquired, it would make a more moderate and chaſtiſed uſe of it, and would piouſly tremble entirely to diſorganize the ſtate in the ſavage manner that they have done. They expect, from the virtues of returning deſpotiſm, the ſecurity which is to be enjoyed by the offspring of their popular vices.

I wiſh, Sir, that you and my readers would give an attentive peruſal to the work of M. de Calonne, on this ſubject. It is indeed not only an eloquent but an able and inſtructive performance. I confine myſelf to what he ſays relative to the conſtitution of the new ſtate, and to the condition of the revenue. As to the diſputes of this miniſter with his rivals, I do not wiſh to pronounce upon them. As little do I mean to hazard any opinion concerning his ways and means, financial or political, for taking his country out of its preſent diſgraceful and deplorable ſituation of ſervitude, anarchy, bankruptcy, and beggary. I cannot ſpeculate

quite

quite ſo ſanguinely as he does: but he is a Frenchman, and has a cloſer duty relative to thoſe objects, and better means of judging of them, than I can have. I wiſh that the formal avowal which he refers to, made by one of the principal leaders in the aſſembly, concerning the tendency of their ſcheme to bring France not only from a monarchy to a republick, but from a republick to a mere confederacy, may be very particularly attended to. It adds new force to my obſervations; and indeed M. de Calonne's work ſupplies my deficiencies by many new and ſtriking arguments on moſt of the ſubjects of this letter *.

It is this reſolution, to break their country into ſeparate republicks, which has driven them into the greateſt number of their difficulties and contradictions. If it were not for this, all the queſtions of exact equality, and theſe balances, never to be ſettled, of individual rights, population, and contribution, would be wholly uſeleſs. The repreſentation, though derived from parts, would be a duty which equally regarded the whole. Each deputy to the aſſembly would be the repreſentative of France, and of all its deſcriptions, of the many and of the few, of the rich and of the poor, of the great diſtricts and of the ſmall. All theſe diſtricts would themſelves be ſubordinate to ſome

* See l'Etat de la France, p. 363.

ſtanding

ſtanding authority, exiſting independently of them, an authority in which their repreſentation, and every thing that belongs to it, originated, and to which it was pointed. This ſtanding, unalterable, fundamental government would make, and it is the only thing which could make, that territory truly and properly a whole. With us, when we elect popular repreſentatives, we ſend them to a council, in which each man individually is a ſubject, and ſubmitted to a government complete in all its ordinary functions. With you the elective aſſembly is the ſovereign, and the ſole ſovereign; all the members are therefore integral parts of this ſole ſovereignty. But with us it is totally different. With us the repreſentative, ſeparated from the other parts, can have no action and no exiſtence. The government is the point of reference of the ſeveral members and diſtricts of our repreſentation. This is the centre of our unity. This government of reference is a truſtee for the *whole*, and not for the parts. So is the other branch of our publick council, I mean the houſe of lords. With us the king and the lords are ſeveral and joint ſecurities for the equality of each diſtrict, each province, each city. When did you hear in Great Britain of any province ſuffering from the inequality of its repreſentation; what diſtrict from having no repreſentation at all? Not only our monarchy and our peerage ſecure the equality

equality on which our unity depends, but it is the ſpirit of the houſe of commons itſelf. The very inequality of repreſentation, which is ſo fooliſhly complained of, is perhaps the very thing which prevents us from thinking or acting as members for diſtricts. Cornwall elects as many members as all Scotland. But is Cornwall better taken care of than Scotland? Few trouble their heads about any of your baſes, out of ſome giddy clubs. Moſt of thoſe who wiſh for any change, upon any plauſible grounds, deſire it on different ideas.

Your new conſtitution is the very reverſe of ours in its principle; and I am aſtoniſhed how any perſons could dream of holding out any thing done in it as an example for Great Britain. With you there is little, or rather no, connection between the laſt repreſentative and the firſt conſtituent. The member who goes to the national aſſembly is not choſen by the people, nor accountable to them. There are three elections before he is choſen: two ſets of magiſtracy intervene between him and the primary aſſembly, ſo as to render him, as I have ſaid, an ambaſſador of a ſtate, and not the repreſentative of the people within a ſtate. By this the whole ſpirit of the election is changed; nor can any corrective your conſtitution-mongers have deviſed, render him any thing elſe than what he is. The very attempt to do it would inevitably introduce a confuſion, if poſſible, more horrid

than the preſent. There is no way to make a connection between the original conſtituent and the repreſentative, but by the circuitous means which may lead the candidate to apply in the firſt inſtance to the primary electors, in order that by *their authoritative inſtructions* (and ſomething more perhaps) theſe primary electors may force the two ſucceeding bodies of electors to make a choice agreeable to their wiſhes. But this would plainly ſubvert the whole ſcheme. It would be to plunge them back into that tumult and confuſion of popular election, which by their interpoſed gradation of elections, they mean to avoid, and at length to riſk the whole fortune of the ſtate with thoſe who have the leaſt knowledge of it, and the leaſt intereſt in it. This is a perpetual dilemma, into which they are thrown by the vicious, weak, and contradictory principles they have choſen. Unleſs the people break up and level this gradation, it is plain that they do not at all ſubſtantially elect to the aſſembly; indeed they elect as little in appearance as reality.

What is it we all ſeek for in an election? To anſwer its real purpoſes; you muſt firſt poſſeſs the means of knowing the fitneſs of your man; and then you muſt retain ſome hold upon him by perſonal obligation or dependence. For what end are theſe primary electors complimented, or rather mocked with a choice? They can never know any

any thing of the qualities of him that is to ſerve them, nor has he any obligation whatſoever to them. Of all the powers unfit to be delegated by thoſe who have any real means of judging, that moſt peculiarly unfit is what relates to a *perſonal* choice. In caſe of abuſe, that body of primary electors never can call the repreſentative to an account for his conduct. He is too far removed from them in the chain of repreſentation. If he acts improperly at the end of his two years leaſe, it does not concern him for two years more. By the new French conſtitution the beſt and the wiſeſt repreſentatives go equally with the worſt into this *Limbus Patrum*. Their bottoms are ſuppoſed foul, and they muſt go into dock to be refitted. Every man who has ſerved in an aſſembly is ineligible for two years after. Juſt as theſe magiſtrates begin to learn their trade, like chimney-ſweepers, they are diſqualified for exerciſing it. Superficial, new, petulant acquiſition, and interrupted, droniſh, broken, ill recollection, is to be the deſtined character of all your future governours. Your conſtitution has too much of jealouſy to have much of ſenſe in it. You conſider the breach of truſt in the repreſentative ſo principally, that you do not at all regard the queſtion of his fitneſs to execute it.

This purgatory interval is not unfavourable to a

faithleſs repreſentative, who may be as good a canvaſſer as he was a bad governour. In this time he may cabal himſelf into a ſuperiority over the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous. As, in the end, all the members of this elective conſtitution are equally fugitive, and exiſt only for the election, they may be no longer the ſame perſons who had choſen him, to whom he is to be reſponſible when he ſolicits for a renewal of his truſt. To call all the ſecondary electors of the *Commune* to account, is ridiculous, impracticable, and unjuſt; they may themſelves have been deceived in their choice, as the third ſet of electors, thoſe of the *Department*, may be in theirs. In your elections reſponſibility cannot exiſt.

Finding no ſort of principle of coherence with each other in the nature and conſtitution of the ſeveral new republicks of France, I conſidered what cement the legiſlators had provided for them from any extraneous materials. Their confederations, their *ſpectacles*, their civick feaſts, and their enthuſiaſm, I take no notice of; they are nothing but mere tricks; but tracing their policy through their actions, I think I can diſtinguiſh the arrangements by which they propoſe to hold theſe republicks together. The firſt, is the *confiſcation*, with the compulſory paper currency annexed to it; the ſecond, is the ſupreme power of the city of Paris; the

the third, is the general army of the ſtate. Of this laſt I ſhall reſerve what I have to ſay, until I come to conſider the army as an head by itſelf.

As to the operation of the firſt (the confiſcation and paper currency) merely as a cement, I cannot deny that theſe, the one depending on the other, may for ſome time compoſe ſome ſort of cement, if their madneſs and folly in the management, and in the tempering of the parts together, does not produce a repulſion in the very outſet. But allowing to the ſcheme ſome coherence and ſome duration, it appears to me, that if, after a while, the confiſcation ſhould not be found ſufficient to ſupport the paper coinage (as I am morally certain it will not,) then, inſtead of cementing, it will add infinitely to the diſſociation, diſtraction, and confuſion of theſe confederate republicks, both with relation to each other, and to the ſeveral parts within themſelves. But if the confiſcation ſhould ſo far ſucceed as to ſink the paper currency, the cement is gone with the circulation. In the mean time its binding force will be very uncertain, and it will ſtraiten or relax with every variation in the credit of the paper.

One thing only is certain in this ſcheme, which is an effect ſeemingly collateral, but direct, I have no doubt, in the minds of thoſe who conduct this buſineſs, that is, its effect in producing an *Oligarchy* in every one of the republicks. A paper cir-

culation, not founded on any real money depoſited or engaged for, amounting already to four-and-forty millions of Engliſh money, and this currency by force ſubſtituted in the place of the coin of the kingdom, becoming thereby the ſubſtance of its revenue, as well as the medium of all its commercial and civil intercourſe, muſt put the whole of what power, authority and influence is left, in any form whatſoever it may aſſume, into the hands of the managers and conductors of this circulation.

In England we feel the influence of the bank; though it is only the centre of a voluntary dealing. He knows little indeed of the influence of money upon mankind, who does not ſee the force of the management of a monied concern, which is ſo much more extenſive, and in its nature ſo much more depending on the managers than any of ours. But this is not merely a money concern. There is another member in the ſyſtem inſeparably connected with this money management. It conſiſts in the means of drawing out at diſcretion portions of the confiſcated lands for ſale; and carrying on a proceſs of continual tranſmutation of paper into land, and land into paper. When we follow this proceſs in its effects, we may conceive ſomething of the intenſity of the force with which this ſyſtem muſt operate. By this means the ſpirit of money jobbing and ſpeculation goes into the maſs of land itſelf, and incorporates with it. By

this kind of operation, that ſpecies of property becomes (as it were) volatilized; it aſſumes an unnatural and monſtrous activity, and thereby throws into the hands of the ſeveral managers, principal and ſubordinate, Pariſian and provincial, all the repreſentative of money, and perhaps a full tenth part of all the land in France, which has now acquired the worſt and moſt pernicious part of the evil of a paper circulation, the greateſt poſſible uncertainty in its value. They have reverſed the Latonian kindneſs to the landed property of Delos. They have ſent theirs to be blown about, like the light fragments of a wreck, *oras et littora circum.*

The new dealers being all habitually adventurers, and without any fixed habits or local predilections, will purchaſe to job out again, as the market of paper, or of money, or of land ſhall preſent an advantage. For though a holy biſhop thinks that agriculture will derive great advantages from the "*enlightened*" uſurers who are to purchaſe the church confiſcations, I, who am not a good, but an old farmer, with great humility beg leave to tell his late lordſhip, that uſury is not tutor of agriculture; and if the word "enlight-"ened" be underſtood according to the new dictionary, as it always is in your new ſchools, I cannot conceive how a man's not believing in God can teach him to cultivate the earth with the leaſt

of any additional ſkill or encouragement. "Diis "immortalibus ſero," ſaid an old Roman, when he held one handle of the plough, whilſt Death held the other. Though you were to join in the commiſſion all the directors of the two academies to the directors of the *Caiſſe d'Eſcompte*, an old experienced peaſant is worth them all. I have got more information upon a curious and intereſting branch of huſbandry, in one ſhort converſation with an old Carthuſian monk, than I have derived from all the Bank directors that I have ever converſed with. However, there is no cauſe for apprehenſion from the meddling of money-dealers with rural œconomy. Theſe gentlemen are too wiſe in their generation. At firſt, perhaps, their tender and ſuſceptible imaginations may be captivated with the innocent and unprofitable delights of a paſtoral life; but in a little time they will find that agriculture is a trade much more laborious, and much leſs lucrative than that which they had left. After making its panegyrick, they will turn their backs on it like their great precurſor and prototype. They may, like him, begin by ſinging "*Beatus ille*" —but what will be the end?

Hæc ubi locutus fœnerator Alphius,
Jam jam futurus ruſticus
Omnem relegit idibus pecuniam;
Quærit calendis ponere.

They

They will cultivate the *Caiſſe d'Egliſe*, under the ſacred auſpices of this prelate, with much more profit than its vineyards and its corn-fields. They will employ their talents according to their habits and their intereſts. They will not follow the plough whilſt they can direct treaſuries, and govern provinces.

Your legiſlators, in every thing new, are the very firſt who have founded a commonwealth upon gaming, and infuſed this ſpirit into it as its vital breath. The great object in theſe politicks is to metamorphoſe France, from a great kingdom into one great play-table; to turn its inhabitants into a nation of gameſters; to make ſpeculation as extenſive as life; to mix it with all its concerns; and to divert the whole of the hopes and fears of the people from their uſual channels, into the impulſes, paſſions, and ſuperſtitions of thoſe who live on chances. They loudly proclaim their opinion, that this their preſent ſyſtem of a republick cannot poſſibly exiſt without this kind of gaming fund; and that the very thread of its life is ſpun out of the ſtaple of theſe ſpeculations. The old gaming in funds was miſchievous enough undoubtedly; but it was ſo only to individuals. Even when it had its greateſt extent, in the Miſſiſſippi and South Sea, it affected but few, comparatively; where it extends further, as in lotteries, the ſpirit has but a ſingle object. But where the law,

law, which in moſt circumſtances forbids, and in none countenances gaming, is itſelf debauched, ſo as to reverſe its nature and policy, and expreſsly to force the ſubject to this deſtructive table, by bringing the ſpirit and ſymbols of gaming into the minuteſt matters, and engaging every body in it, and in every thing, a more dreadful epidemick diſtemper of that kind is ſpread than yet has appeared in the world. With you a man can neither earn nor buy his dinner, without a ſpeculation. What he receives in the morning will not have the ſame value at night. What he is compelled to take as pay for an old debt, will not be received as the ſame when he comes to pay a debt contracted by himſelf; nor will it be the ſame when by prompt payment he would avoid contracting any debt at all. Induſtry muſt wither away. Œconomy muſt be driven from your country. Careful proviſion will have no exiſtence. Who will labour without knowing the amount of his pay? Who will ſtudy to increaſe what none can eſtimate? Who will accumulate, when he does not know the value of what he ſaves? If you abſtract it from its uſes in gaming, to accumulate your paper wealth, would be not the providence of a man, but the diſtempered inſtinct of a jackdaw.

The truly melancholy part of the policy of ſyſtematically making a nation of gameſters is this; that

that though all are forced to play, few can underſtand the game; and fewer ſtill are in a condition to avail themſelves of that knowledge. The many muſt be the dupes of the few who conduct the machine of theſe ſpeculations. What effect it muſt have on the country-people is viſible. The townſman can calculate from day to day: not ſo the inhabitant of the country. When the peaſant firſt brings his corn to market, the magiſtrate in the towns obliges him to take the aſſignat at par; when he goes to the ſhop with this money, he finds it ſeven per cent. the worſe for croſſing the way. This market he will not readily reſort to again. The towns-people will be inflamed! they will force the country-people to bring their corn. Reſiſtance will begin, and the murders of Paris and St. Dennis may be renewed through all France.

What ſignifies the empty compliment paid to the country by giving it perhaps more than its ſhare in the theory of your repreſentation? Where have you placed the real power over monied and landed circulation? Where have you placed the means of raiſing and falling the value of every man's freehold? Thoſe whoſe operations can take from, or add ten per cent. to, the poſſeſſions of every man in France, muſt be the maſters of every man in France. The whole of the power obtained by this revolution will ſettle in the towns among the burghers, and the monied directors who lead them.

them. The landed gentleman, the yeoman, and the peaſant, have, none of them, habits, or inclinations, or experience, which can lead them to any ſhare in this the ſole ſource of power and influence now left in France. The very nature of a country life, the very nature of landed property, in all the occupations, and all the pleaſures they afford, render combination and arrangement (the ſole way of procuring and exerting influence) in a manner impoſſible amongſt country-people. Combine them by all the art you can, and all the induſtry, they are always diſſolving into individuality. Any thing in the nature of incorporation is almoſt impracticable amongſt them. Hope, fear, alarm, jealouſy, the ephemerous tale that does its buſineſs, and dies in a day, all theſe things, which are the reins and ſpurs by which leaders check or urge the minds of followers, are not eaſily employed, or hardly at all, amongſt ſcattered people. They aſſemble, they arm, they act with the utmoſt difficulty, and at the greateſt charge. Their efforts, if ever they can be commenced, cannot be ſuſtained. They cannot proceed ſyſtematically. If the country gentlemen attempt an influence through the mere income of their property, what is it to that of thoſe who have ten times their income to ſell, and who can ruin their property by bringing their plunder to meet it at market? If the landed man wiſhes to mortgage, he falls the value

value of his land, and raiſes the value of aſſignats. He augments the power of his enemy by the very means he muſt take to contend with him. The country gentleman therefore, the officer by ſea and land, the man of liberal views and habits, attached to no profeſſion, will be as completely excluded from the government of his country as if he were legiſlatively proſcribed. It is obvious, that in the towns, all the things which conſpire againſt the country gentlemen, combine in favour of the money manager and director. In towns combination is natural. The habits of burghers, their occupations, their diverſion, their buſineſs, their idleneſs, continually bring them into mutual contact. Their virtues and their vices are ſociable; they are always in garriſon; and they come embodied and half diſciplined into the hands of thoſe who mean to form them for civil or military action.

All theſe conſiderations leave no doubt on my mind, that if this monſter of a conſtitution can continue, France will be wholly governed by the agitators in corporations, by ſocieties in the towns formed of directors in aſſignats, and truſtees for the ſale of church lands, attornies, agents, money jobbers, ſpeculators, and adventurers, compoſing an ignoble oligarchy, founded on the deſtruction of the crown, the church, the nobility, and the people. Here end all the deceitful dreams and viſions

viſions of the equality and rights of men. In "the Serbonian bog" of this baſe oligarchy they are all abſorbed, ſunk, and loſt for ever.

Though human eyes cannot trace them, one would be tempted to think ſome great offences in France muſt cry to heaven, which has thought fit to puniſh it with a ſubjection to a vile and inglorious domination, in which no comfort or compenſation is to be found in any, even of thoſe falſe ſplendours, which, playing about other tyrannies, prevent mankind from feeling themſelves diſhonoured even whilſt they are oppreſſed. I muſt confeſs I am touched with a ſorrow, mixed with ſome indignation, at the conduct of a few men, once of great rank, and ſtill of great character, who, deluded with ſpecious names, have engaged in a buſineſs too deep for the line of their underſtanding to fathom; who have lent their fair reputation and the authority of their high-ſounding names, to the deſigns of men with whom they could not be acquainted; and have thereby made their very virtues operate to the ruin of their country.

So far as to the firſt cementing principle.

The ſecond material of cement for their new republick is the ſuperiority of the city of Paris; and this I admit is ſtrongly connected with the other cementing principle of paper circulation and confiſcation. It is in this part of the project we muſt

muſt look for the cauſe of the deſtruction of all the old bounds of provinces and juriſdictions, eccleſiaſtical and ſecular, and the diſſolution of all ancient combinations of things, as well as the formation of ſo many ſmall unconnected republicks. The power of the city of Paris is evidently one great ſpring of all their politicks. It is through the power of Paris, now become the center and focus of jobbing, that the leaders of this faction direct, or rather command, the whole legiſlative and the whole executive government. Every thing therefore muſt be done which can confirm the authority of that city over the other republicks. Paris is compact; ſhe has an enormous ſtrength, wholly diſproportioned to the force of any of the ſquare republicks; and this ſtrength is collected and condenſed within a narrow compaſs. Paris has a natural and eaſy connection of its parts, which will not be affected by any ſcheme of a geometrical conſtitution, nor does it much ſignify whether its proportion of repreſentation be more or leſs, ſince it has the whole draft of fiſhes in its drag-net. The other diviſions of the kingdom being hackled and torn to pieces, and ſeparated from all their habitual means, and even principles of union, cannot, for ſome time at leaſt, confederate againſt her. Nothing was to be left in all the ſubordinate members, but weakneſs, diſconnection, and confuſion. To confirm this part of the plan, the aſ-

ſembly

ſembly has lately come to a reſolution, that no two of their republicks ſhall have the ſame commander in chief.

To a perſon who takes a view of the whole, the ſtrength of Paris thus formed, will appear a ſyſtem of general weakneſs. It is boaſted that the geometrical policy has been adopted, that all local ideas ſhould be ſunk, and that the people ſhould be no longer Gaſcons, Picards, Bretons, Normans, but Frenchmen, with one country, one heart, and one aſſembly. But inſtead of being all Frenchmen, the greater likelihood is, that the inhabitants of that region will ſhortly have no country. No man ever was attached by a ſenſe of pride, partiality, or real affection, to a deſcription of ſquare meaſurement. He never will glory in belonging to the Checquer N° 71, or to any other badge-ticket. We begin our publick affections in our families. No cold relation is a zealous citizen. We paſs on to our neighbourhoods, and our habitual provincial connections. Theſe are inns and reſting places. Such diviſions of our country as have been formed by habit, and not by a ſudden jerk of authority, were ſo many little images of the great country in which the heart found ſomething which it could fill. The love to the whole is not extinguiſhed by this ſubordinate partiality. Perhaps it is a ſort of elemental training to thoſe higher and more large regards, by which alone

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men come to be affected, as with their own concern, in the proſperity of a kingdom ſo extenſive as that of France. In that general territory itſelf, as in the old name of provinces, the citizens are intereſted from old prejudices and unreaſoned habits, and not on account of the geometrick properties of its figure. The power and pre-eminence of Paris does certainly preſs down and hold theſe republicks together as long as it laſts. But, for the reaſons I have already given you, I think it cannot laſt very long.

Paſſing from the civil creating, and the civil cementing principles of this conſtitution, to the national aſſembly, which is to appear and act as ſovereign, we ſee a body in its conſtitution with every poſſible power, and no poſſible external control. We ſee a body without fundamental laws, without eſtabliſhed maxims, without reſpected rules of proceeding, which nothing can keep firm to any ſyſtem whatſoever. Their idea of their powers is always taken at the utmoſt ſtretch of legiſlative competency, and their examples for common caſes, from the exception of the moſt urgent neceſſity. The future is to be in moſt reſpects like the preſent aſſembly; but, by the mode of the new elections and the tendency of the new circulations, it will be purged of the ſmall degree of internal control exiſting in a minority choſen originally from various intereſts, and preſerving

ſomething of their ſpirit. If poſſible, the next aſſembly muſt be worſe than the preſent. The preſent, by deſtroying and altering every thing, will leave to their ſucceſſors apparently nothing popular to do. They will be roufed by emulation and example to enterpriſes the boldeſt and the moſt abſurd. To ſuppoſe ſuch an aſſembly ſitting in perfect quietude is ridiculous.

Your all-ſufficient legiſlators, in their hurry to do every thing at once, have forgot one thing that ſeems eſſential, and which, I believe, never has been before, in the theory or the practice, omitted by any projector of a republick. They have forgot to conſtitute a *ſenate*, or ſomething of that nature and character. Never, before this time, was heard of a body politick compoſed of one legiſlative and active aſſembly, and its executive officers, without ſuch a council; without ſomething to which foreign ſtates might connect themſelves; ſomething to which, in the ordinary detail of government, the people could look up; ſomething which might give a bias and ſteadineſs, and preſerve ſomething like conſiſtency in the proceedings of ſtate. Such a body kings generally have as a council. A monarchy may exiſt without it; but it ſeems to be in the very eſſence of a republican government. It holds a ſort of middle place between the ſupreme power exerciſed by the people, or immediately delegated from them, and the mere

mere executive. Of this there are no traces in your conſtitution; and in providing nothing of this kind, your Solons and Numas have, as much as in any thing elſe, diſcovered a ſovereign incapacity.

Let us now turn our eyes to what they have done towards the formation of an executive power. For this they have choſen a degraded king. This their firſt executive officer is to be a machine, without any ſort of deliberative diſcretion in any one act of his function. At beſt he is but a channel to convey to the national aſſembly ſuch matter as may import that body to know. If he had been made the excluſive channel, the power would not have been without its importance; though infinitely perilous to thoſe who would chooſe to exerciſe it. But publick intelligence and ſtatement of facts may paſs to the aſſembly, with equal authenticity, through any other conveyance. As to the means, therefore, of giving a direction to meaſures by the ſtatement of an authorized reporter, this office of intelligence is as nothing.

To conſider the French ſcheme of an executive officer, in its two natural diviſions of civil and political—In the firſt it muſt be obſerved, that, according to the new conſtitution, the higher parts of judicature, in either of its lines, are not in the king. The king of France is not the fountain of

juſtice. The judges, neither the original nor the appellate, are of his nomination. He neither propoſes the candidates, nor has a negative on the choice. He is not even the publick proſecutor. He ſerves only as a notary to authenticate the choice made of the judges in the ſeveral diſtricts. By his officers he is to execute their ſentence. When we look into the true nature of his authority, he appears to be nothing more than a chief of bumbailiffs, ſerjeants at mace, catchpoles, jailers, and hangmen. It is impoſſible to place any thing called royalty in a more degrading point of view. A thouſand times better it had been for the dignity of this unhappy prince, that he had nothing at all to do with the adminiſtration of juſtice, deprived as he is of all that is venerable, and all that is conſolatory in that function, without power of originating any proceſs; without a power of ſuſpenſion, mitigation, or pardon. Every thing in juſtice that is vile and odious is thrown upon him. It was not for nothing that the aſſembly has been at ſuch pains to remove the ſtigma from certain offices, when they were reſolved to place the perſon who had lately been their king in a ſituation but one degree above the executioner, and in an office nearly of the ſame quality. It is not in nature, that ſituated as the king of the French now is, he can reſpect himſelf, or can be reſpected by others.

View

View this new executive officer on the ſide of his political capacity, as he acts under the orders of the national aſſembly. To execute laws is a royal office; to execute orders is not to be a king. However, a political executive magiſtracy, though merely ſuch, is a great truſt. It is a truſt indeed that has much depending upon its faithful and diligent performance, both in the perſon preſiding in it and in all its ſubordinates. Means of performing this duty ought to be given by regulation; and diſpoſitions towards it ought to be infuſed by the circumſtances attendant on the truſt. It ought to be environed with dignity, authority, and conſideration, and it ought to lead to glory. The office of execution is an office of exertion. It is not from impotence we are to expect the taſks of power. What ſort of perſon is a king to command executory ſervice, who has no means whatſoever to reward it? Not in a permanent office; not in a grant of land; no, not in a penſion of fifty pounds a year; not in the vaineſt and moſt trivial title. In France the king is no more the fountain of honour than he is the fountain of juſtice. All rewards, all diſtinctions are in other hands. Thoſe who ſerve the king can be actuated by no natural motive but fear; by a fear of every thing except their maſter. His functions of internal coercion are as odious, as thoſe which he exerciſes in the department of juſtice. If relief is

to be given to any municipality, the aſſembly gives it. If troops are to be ſent to reduce them to obedience to the aſſembly, the king is to execute the order; and upon every occaſion he is to be ſpattered over with the blood of his people. He has no negative; yet his name and authority is uſed to enforce every harſh decree. Nay, he muſt concur in the butchery of thoſe who ſhall attempt to free him from his impriſonment, or ſhew the ſlighteſt attachment to his perſon or to his ancient authority.

Executive magiſtracy ought to be conſtituted in ſuch a manner, that thoſe who compoſe it ſhould be diſpoſed to love and to venerate thoſe whom they are bound to obey. A purpoſed neglect, or, what is worſe, a literal but perverſe and malignant obedience, muſt be the ruin of the wiſeſt counſels. In vain will the law attempt to anticipate or to follow ſuch ſtudied neglects and fraudulent attentions. To make them act zealouſly is not in the competence of law. Kings, even ſuch as are truly kings, may and ought to bear the freedom of ſubjects that are obnoxious to them. They may too, without derogating from themſelves, bear even the authority of ſuch perſons if it promotes their ſervice. Louis the XIIIth mortally hated the cardinal de Richelieu; but his ſupport of that miniſter againſt his rivals was the ſource of all the glory of his reign, and the ſolid foundation of his

his throne itſelf. Louis the XIVth, when come to the throne, did not love the cardinal Mazarin; but for his intereſts he preſerved him in power. When old, he deteſted Louvois; but for years, whilſt he faithfully ſerved his greatneſs, he endured his perſon. When George the IId took Mr. Pitt, who certainly was not agreeable to him, into his councils, he did nothing which could humble a wiſe ſovereign. But theſe miniſters, who were choſen by affairs, not by affections, acted in the name of, and in truſt for, kings; and not as their avowed, conſtitutional, and oſtenſible maſters. I think it impoſſible that any king, when he has recovered his firſt terrours, can cordially infuſe vivacity and vigour into meaſures which he knows to be dictated by thoſe who he muſt be perſuaded are in the higheſt degree ill affected to his perſon. Will any miniſters, who ſerve ſuch a king (or whatever he may be called) with but a decent appearance of reſpect, cordially obey the orders of thoſe whom but the other day in his name they had committed to the Baſtile? will they obey the orders of thoſe whom, whilſt they were exerciſing deſpotick juſtice upon them, they conceived they were treating with lenity; and for whom, in a priſon, they thought they had provided an aſylum? If you expect ſuch obedience, amongſt your other innovations and regenerations, you ought to make a revolution in nature, and provide a new

conſtitution for the human mind. Otherwiſe, your ſupreme government cannot harmonize with its executory ſyſtem. There are caſes in which we cannot take up with names and abſtractions. You may call half a dozen leading individuals, whom we have reaſon to fear and hate, the nation. It makes no other difference, than to make us fear and hate them the more. If it had been thought juſtifiable and expedient to make ſuch a revolution by ſuch means, and through ſuch perſons, as you have made yours, it would have been more wiſe to have completed the buſineſs of the fifth and ſixth of October. The new executive officer would then owe his ſituation to thoſe who are his creators as well as his maſters; and he might be bound in intereſt, in the ſociety of crime, and (if in crimes there could be virtues) in gratitude to ſerve thoſe who had promoted him to a place of great lucre and great ſenſual indulgence; and of ſomething more: for more he muſt have received from thoſe who certainly would not have limited an aggrandized creature, as they have done a ſubmitting antagoniſt.

A king circumſtanced as the preſent, if he is totally ſtupified by his misfortunes, ſo as to think it not the neceſſity, but the premium and privilege of life, to eat and ſleep, without any regard to glory, can never be fit for the office. If he feels as men commonly feel, he muſt be ſenſible, that

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an office ſo circumſtanced is one in which he can obtain no fame or reputation. He has no generous intereſt that can excite him to action. At beſt, his conduct will be paſſive and defenſive. To inferiour people ſuch an office might be matter of honour. But to be raiſed to it, and to deſcend to it, are different things, and ſuggeſt different ſentiments. Does he *really* name the miniſters? They will have a ſympathy with him. Are they forced upon him? The whole buſineſs between them and the nominal king will be mutual counteraction. In all other countries, the office of miniſters of ſtate is of the higheſt dignity. In France it is full of peril and incapable of glory. Rivals however they will have in their nothingneſs, whilſt ſhallow ambition exiſts in the world, or the deſire of a miſerable ſalary is an incentive to ſhort-ſighted avarice. Thoſe competitors of the miniſters are enabled by your conſtitution to attack them in their vital parts, whilſt they have not the means of repelling their charges in any other than the degrading character of culprits. The miniſters of ſtate in France are the only perſons in that country who are incapable of a ſhare in the national councils. What miniſters! What councils! What a nation! —But they are reſponſible. It is a poor ſervice that is to be had from reſponſibility. The elevation of mind, to be derived from fear, will never make a nation glorious. Reſponſibility prevents crimes.

crimes. It makes all attempts againſt the laws dangerous. But for a principle of active and zealous ſervice, none but idiots could think of it. Is the conduct of a war to be truſted to a man who may abhor its principle; who, in every ſtep he may take to render it ſucceſsful, confirms the power of thoſe by whom he is oppreſſed? Will foreign ſtates ſeriouſly treat with him who has no prerogative of peace or war; no, not ſo much as in a ſingle vote by himſelf or his miniſters, or by any one whom he can poſſibly influence? A ſtate of contempt is not a ſtate for a prince: better get rid of him at once.

I know it will be ſaid, that theſe humours in the court and executive government will continue only through this generation; and that the king has been brought to declare the dauphin ſhall be educated in a conformity to his ſituation. If he is made to conform to his ſituation, he will have no education at all. His training muſt be worſe even than that of an arbitrary monarch. If he reads—whether he reads or not, ſome good or evil genius will tell him his anceſtors were kings. Thenceforward his object muſt be to aſſert himſelf, and to avenge his parents. This you will ſay is not his duty. That may be; but it is nature; and whilſt you pique nature againſt you, you do unwiſely to truſt to duty. In this futile ſcheme of polity, the ſtate nurſes in its boſom, for the preſent,

ſent, a ſource of weakneſs, perplexity, counteraction, inefficiency, and decay; and it prepares the means of its final ruin. In ſhort, I ſee nothing in the executive force (I cannot call it authority) that has even an appearance of vigour, or that has the ſmalleſt degree of juſt correſpondence or ſymmetry, or amicable relation, with the ſupreme power, either as it now exiſts, or as it is planned for the future government.

You have ſettled, by an œconomy as perverted as the policy, two * eſtabliſhments of government; one real, one fictitious. Both maintained at a vaſt expence; but the fictitious at, I think, the greateſt. Such a machine as the latter is not worth the greaſe of its wheels. The expence is exorbitant; and neither the ſhew nor the uſe deſerve the tenth part of the charge. Oh! but I don't do juſtice to the talents of the legiſlators: I don't allow, as I ought to do, for neceſſity. Their ſcheme of executive force was not their choice. This pageant muſt be kept. The people would not conſent to part with it. Right; I underſtand you. You do, in ſpite of your grand theories, to which you would have heaven and earth to bend, you do know how to conform yourſelves to the nature and circumſtances of things. But when you were obliged to conform thus far to circumſtances, you

* In reality three, to reckon the provincial republican eſtabliſhments.

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ought to have carried your ſubmiſſion farther, and to have made what you were obliged to take, a proper inſtrument, and uſeful to its end. That was in your power. For inſtance, among many others, it was in your power to leave to your king the right of peace and war. What; to leave to the executive magiſtrate the moſt dangerous of all prerogatives? I know none more dangerous; nor any one more neceſſary to be ſo truſted. I do not ſay that this prerogative ought to be truſted to your king, unleſs he enjoyed other auxiliary truſts along with it, which he does not now hold. But, if he did poſſeſs them, hazardous as they are undoubtedly, advantages would ariſe from ſuch a conſtitution, more than compenſating the riſk. There is no other way of keeping the ſeveral potentates of Europe from intriguing diſtinctly and perſonally with the members of your aſſembly, from intermeddling in all your concerns, and fomenting, in the heart of your country, the moſt pernicious of all factions; factions in the intereſt and under the direction of foreign powers. From that worſt of evils, thank God, we are ſtill free. Your ſkill, if you had any, would be well employed to find out indirect correctives and controls upon this perilous truſt. If you did not like thoſe which in England we have choſen, your leaders might have exerted their abilities in contriving better. If it were neceſſary to exemplify the conſequences

ſequences of ſuch an executive government as yours, in the management of great affairs, I ſhould refer you to the late reports of M. de Montmorin to the national aſſembly, and all the other proceedings relative to the differences between Great Britain and Spain. It would be treating your underſtanding with diſreſpect to point them out to you.

I hear that the perſons who are called miniſters have ſignified an intention of reſigning their places. I am rather aſtoniſhed that they have not reſigned long ſince. For the univerſe I would not have ſtood in the ſituation in which they have been for this laſt twelvemonth. They wiſhed well, I take it for granted, to the revolution. Let this fact be as it may, they could not, placed as they were upon an eminence, though an eminence of humiliation, but be the firſt to ſee collectively, and to feel each in his own department, the evils which have been produced by that revolution. In every ſtep which they took, or forbore to take, they muſt have felt the degraded ſituation of their country, and their utter incapacity of ſerving it. They are in a ſpecies of ſubordinate ſervitude, in which no men before them were ever ſeen. Without confidence from their ſovereign, on whom they were forced, or from the aſſembly who forced them upon him, all the noble functions of their office are executed by committees of the aſſembly,

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without any regard whatſoever to their perſonal, or their official authority. They are to execute, without power; they are to be reſponſible, without diſcretion; they are to deliberate, without choice. In their puzzled ſituation, under two ſovereigns, over neither of whom they have any influence, they muſt act in ſuch a manner as (in effect, whatever they may intend) ſometimes to betray the one, ſometimes the other, and always to betray themſelves. Such has been their ſituation; ſuch muſt be the ſituation of thoſe who ſucceed them. I have much reſpect, and many good wiſhes, for Mr. Necker. I am obliged to him for attentions. I thought when his enemies had driven him from Verſailles, that his exile was a ſubject of moſt ſerious congratulation—*ſed multæ urbes et publica vota vicerunt.* He is now ſitting on the ruins of the finances, and of the monarchy of France.

A great deal more might be obſerved on the ſtrange conſtitution of the executory part of the new government; but fatigue muſt give bounds to the diſcuſſion of ſubjects, which in themſelves have hardly any limits.

As little genius and talent am I able to perceive in the plan of judicature formed by the national aſſembly. According to their invariable courſe, the framers of your conſtitution have begun with the utter abolition of the parliaments. Theſe ve-

nerable bodies, like the reſt of the old government, ſtood in need of reform, even though there ſhould be no change made in the monarchy. They required ſeveral more alterations to adapt them to the ſyſtem of a free conſtitution. But they had particulars in their conſtitution, and thoſe not a few, which deſerved approbation from the wiſe. They poſſeſſed one fundamental excellence; they were independent. The moſt doubtful circumſtance attendant on their office, that of its being vendible, contributed however to this independency of character. They held for life. Indeed they may be ſaid to have held by inheritance. Appointed by the monarch, they were conſidered as nearly out of his power. The moſt determined exertions of that authority againſt them only ſhewed their radical independence. They compoſed permanent bodies politick, conſtituted to reſiſt arbitrary innovation; and from that corporate conſtitution, and from moſt of their forms, they were well calculated to afford both certainty and ſtability to the laws. They had been a ſafe aſylum to ſecure theſe laws, in all the revolutions of humour and opinion. They had ſaved that ſacred depoſit of the country during the reigns of arbitrary princes, and the ſtruggles of arbitrary factions. They kept alive the memory and record of the conſtitution. They were the great ſecurity

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to private property; which might be ſaid (when perſonal liberty had no exiſtence) to be, in fact, as well guarded in France as in any other country. Whatever is ſupreme in a ſtate, ought to have, as much as poſſible, its judicial authority ſo conſtituted as not only not to depend upon it, but in ſome ſort to balance it. It ought to give a ſecurity to its juſtice againſt its power. It ought to make its judicature, as it were, ſomething exterior to the ſtate.

Theſe parliaments had furniſhed, not the beſt certainly, but ſome conſiderable corrective to the exceſſes and vices of the monarchy. Such an independent judicature was ten times more neceſſary when a democracy became the abſolute power of the country. In that conſtitution, elective, temporary, local judges, ſuch as you have contrived, exerciſing their dependent functions in a narrow ſociety, muſt be the worſt of all tribunals. In them it will be vain to look for any appearance of juſtice towards ſtrangers, towards the obnoxious rich, towards the minority of routed parties, towards all thoſe who in the election have ſupported unſucceſsful candidates. It will be impoſſible to keep the new tribunals clear of the worſt ſpirit of faction. All contrivances by ballot, we know experimentally to be vain and childiſh to prevent a diſcovery of inclinations. Where they may

may the beſt anſwer the purpoſes of concealment, they anſwer to produce ſuſpicion, and this is a ſtill more miſchievous cauſe of partiality.

If the parliaments had been preſerved, inſtead of being diſſolved at ſo ruinous a change to the nation, they might have ſerved in this new commonwealth, perhaps not preciſely the ſame (I do not mean an exact parallel) but near the ſame purpoſes as the court and ſenate of Areopagus did in Athens; that is, as one of the balances and correctives to the evils of a light and unjuſt democracy. Every one knows that this tribunal was the great ſtay of that ſtate; every one knows with what care it was upheld, and with what a religious awe it was conſecrated. The parliaments were not wholly free from faction, I admit; but this evil was exterior and accidental, and not ſo much the vice of their conſtitution itſelf, as it muſt be in your new contrivance of ſexennial elective judicatories. Several Engliſh commend the abolition of the old tribunals, as ſuppoſing that they determined every thing by bribery and corruption. But they have ſtood the teſt of monarchick and republican ſcrutiny. The court was well diſpoſed to prove corruption on thoſe bodies when they were diſſolved in 1771.—Thoſe who have again diſſolved them would have done the ſame if they could—but both inquiſitions having failed, I conclude, that groſs pecuniary cor-

ruption muſt have been rather rare amongſt them.

It would have been prudent, along with the parliaments, to preſerve their ancient power of regiſtering, and of remonſtrating at leaſt, upon all the decrees of the national aſſembly, as they did upon thoſe which paſſed in the time of the monarchy. It would be a means of ſquaring the occaſional decrees of a democracy to ſome principles of general juriſprudence. The vice of the ancient democracies, and one cauſe of their ruin, was, that they ruled, as you do, by occaſional decrees, *pſephiſmata*. This practice ſoon broke in upon the tenour and conſiſtency of the laws; it abated the reſpect of the people towards them; and totally deſtroyed them in the end.

Your veſting the power of remonſtrance, which, in the time of the monarchy, exiſted in the parliament of Paris, in your principal executive officer, whom, in ſpite of common ſenſe, you perſevere in calling king, is the height of abſurdity. You ought never to ſuffer remonſtrance from him who is to execute. This is to underſtand neither council nor execution; neither authority nor obedience. The perſon whom you call king, ought not to have this power, or he ought to have more.

Your preſent arrangement is ſtrictly judicial. Inſtead of imitating your monarchy, and ſeating your

your judges on a bench of independence, your object is to reduce them to the moſt blind obedience. As you have changed all things, you have invented new principles of order. You firſt appoint judges, who, I ſuppoſe, are to determine according to law, and then you let them know, that, at ſome time or other, you intend to give them ſome law by which they are to determine. Any ſtudies which they have made (if any they have made) are to be uſeleſs to them. But to ſupply theſe ſtudies, they are to be ſworn to obey all the rules, orders, and inſtructions, which from time to time they are to receive from the national aſſembly. Theſe if they ſubmit to, they leave no ground of law to the ſubject. They become complete and moſt dangerous inſtruments in the hands of the governing power, which, in the midſt of a cauſe, or on the proſpect of it, may wholly change the rule of deciſion. If theſe orders of the national aſſembly come to be contrary to the will of the people, who locally chooſe thoſe judges, ſuch confuſion muſt happen as is terrible to think of. For the judges owe their place to the local authority; and the commands they are ſworn to obey come from thoſe who have no ſhare in their appointment. In the mean time they have the example of the court of *Chatelet* to encourage and guide them in the exerciſe of their functions. That court is to try criminals ſent to it by the national

aſſembly, or brought before it by other courſes of delation. They ſit under a guard, to ſave their own lives. They know not by what law they judge, nor under what authority they act, nor by what tenure they hold. It is thought that they are ſometimes obliged to condemn at peril of their lives. This is not perhaps certain, nor can it be aſcertained; but when they acquit, we know they have ſeen the perſons whom they diſcharge, with perfect impunity to the actors, hanged at the door of their court.

The aſſembly indeed promiſes that they will form a body of law, which ſhall be ſhort, ſimple, clear, and ſo forth. That is, by their ſhort laws, they will leave much to the diſcretion of the judge; whilſt they have exploded the authority of all the learning which could make judicial diſcretion (a thing perilous at beſt) deſerving the appellation of a *found* diſcretion.

It is curious to obſerve, that the adminiſtrative bodies are carefully exempted from the juriſdiction of theſe new tribunals. That is, thoſe perſons are exempted from the power of the laws, who ought to be the moſt entirely ſubmitted to them. Thoſe who execute publick pecuniary truſts, ought of all men to be the moſt ſtrictly held to their duty. One would have thought that it muſt have been among your earlieſt cares, if you did not mean that thoſe adminiſtrative bodies ſhould be real ſovereign

vereign independent ſtates, to form an awful tribunal, like your late parliaments, or like our king's-bench, where all corporate officers might obtain protection in the legal exerciſe of their functions, and would find coercion if they treſpaſſed againſt their legal duty. But the cauſe of the exemption is plain. Theſe adminiſtrative bodies are the great inſtruments of the preſent leaders in their progreſs through democracy to oligarchy. They muſt therefore be put above the law. It will be ſaid, that the legal tribunals which you have made are unfit to coerce them. They are undoubtedly. They are unfit for any rational purpoſe. It will be ſaid too, that the adminiſtrative bodies will be accountable to the general aſſembly. This I fear is talking, without much conſideration, of the nature of that aſſembly, or of theſe corporations. However, to be ſubject to the pleaſure of that aſſembly, is not to be ſubject to law, either for protection or for conſtraint.

This eſtabliſhment of judges as yet wants ſomething to its completion. It is to be crowned by a new tribunal. This is to be a grand ſtate judicature; and it is to judge of crimes committed againſt the nation, that is, againſt the power of the aſſembly. It ſeems as if they had ſomething in their view of the nature of the high court of juſtice erected in England during the time of the great uſurpation. As they have not yet finiſhed

this part of the ſcheme, it is impoſſible to form a direct judgment upon it. However, if great care is not taken to form it in a ſpirit very different from that which has guided them in their proceedings relative to ſtate offences, this tribunal, ſubſervient to their inquiſition, *the committee of reſearch*, will extinguiſh the laſt ſparks of liberty in France, and ſettle the moſt dreadful and arbitrary tyranny ever known in any nation. If they wiſh to give to this tribunal any appearance of liberty and juſtice, they muſt not evoke from, or ſend to it, the cauſes relative to their own members, at their pleaſure. They muſt alſo remove the ſeat of that tribunal out of the republick of Paris *.

Has more wiſdom been diſplayed in the conſtitution of your army than what is diſcoverable in your plan of judicature? The able arrangement of this part is the more difficult, and requires the greater ſkill and attention, not only as a great concern in itſelf, but as it is the third cementing principle in the new body of republicks, which you call the French nation. Truly it is not eaſy to divine what that army may become at laſt. You have voted a very large one, and on good appointments, at leaſt fully equal to your apparent means of payment. But what is the principle of its diſ-

* For further elucidations upon the ſubject of all theſe judicatures, and of the committee of reſearch, ſee M. de Calonne's work.

cipline?

cipline? or whom is it to obey? You have got the wolf by the ears, and I wiſh you joy of the happy poſition in which you have choſen to place yourſelves, and in which you are well circumſtanced for a free deliberation, relatively to that army, or to any thing elſe.

The miniſter and ſecretary of ſtate for the war department is M. de la Tour du Pin. This gentleman, like his colleagues in adminiſtration, is a moſt zealous aſſertor of the revolution, and a ſanguine admirer of the new conſtitution, which originated in that event. His ſtatement of facts, relative to the military of France, is important, not only from his official and perſonal authority, but becauſe it diſplays very clearly the actual condition of the army in France, and becauſe it throws light on the principles upon which the aſſembly proceeds, in the adminiſtration of this critical object. It may enable us to form ſome judgment, how far it may be expedient in this country to imitate the martial policy of France.

M. de la Tour du Pin, on the fourth of laſt June, comes to give an account of the ſtate of his department, as it exiſts under the auſpices of the national aſſembly. No man knows it ſo well; no man can expreſs it better. Addreſſing himſelf to the national aſſembly, he ſays, "His majeſty has "*this day* ſent me to appriſe you of the multiplied "diſorders of which *every day* he receives the

" moſt diſtreſſing intelligence. The army (le corps " militaire) threatens to fall into the moſt turbu- " lent anarchy. Entire regiments have dared to " violate at once the reſpect due to the laws, to " the king, to the order eſtabliſhed by your de- " crees, and to the oaths which they have taken " with the moſt awful ſolemnity. Compelled by " my duty to give you information of theſe ex- " ceſſes, my heart bleeds when I conſider who " they are that have committed them. Thoſe, " againſt whom it is not in my power to with- " hold the moſt grievous complaints, are a part of " that very ſoldiery which to this day have been " ſo full of honour and loyalty, and with whom, " for fifty years, I have lived the comrade and the " friend.

" What incomprehenſible ſpirit of delirium and " deluſion has all at once led them aſtray? Whilſt " you are indefatigable in eſtabliſhing uniformity " in the empire, and moulding the whole into " one coherent and conſiſtent body; whilſt the " French are taught by you, at once the reſpect " which the laws owe to the rights of man, and " that which the citizens owe to the laws, the ad- " miniſtration of the army preſents nothing but " diſturbance and confuſion. I ſee in more than " one corps the bonds of diſcipline relaxed or " broken; the moſt unheard-of pretenſions avow- " ed directly and without any diſguiſe; the or-

" dinances

" dinances without force; the chiefs without au-
" thority; the military cheſt and the colours car-
" ried off; the authority of the king himſelf [*ri-
" ſum teneatis*] proudly defied; the officers deſ-
" piſed, degraded, threatened, driven away, and
" ſome of them priſoners in the midſt of their
" corps, dragging on a precarious life in the boſom
" of diſguſt and humiliation. To fill up the mea-
" ſure of all theſe horrours, the commandants of
" places have had their throats cut, under the eyes,
" and almoſt in the arms of their own ſoldiers.

" Theſe evils are great; but they are not the
" worſt conſequences which may be produced by
" ſuch military inſurrections. Sooner or later they
" may menace the nation itſelf. *The nature of
" things requires* that the army ſhould never act
" but as *an inſtrument.* The moment that, erect-
" ing itſelf into a deliberative body, it ſhall act ac-
" cording to its own reſolutions, the *government,
" be it what it may, will immediately degenerate
" into a military democracy;* a ſpecies of political
" monſter, which has always ended by devouring
" thoſe who have produced it.

" After all this, who muſt not be alarmed at
" the irregular conſultations, and turbulent com-
" mittees, formed in ſome regiments by the com-
" mon ſoldiers and non-commiſſioned officers,
" without the knowledge, or even in contempt
" of the authority of their ſuperiours; although

" the

" the preſence and concurrence of thoſe ſuperiours, " could give no authority to ſuch monſtrous demo- " cratick aſſemblies [comices]."

It is not neceſſary to add much to this finiſhed picture: finiſhed as far as its canvaſs admits; but, as I apprehend, not taking in the whole of the nature and complexity of the diſorders of this military democracy, which, the miniſter at war truly and wiſely obſerves, wherever it exiſts, muſt be the true conſtitution of the ſtate, by whatever formal appellation it may paſs. For, though he informs the aſſembly that the more conſiderable part of the army have not caſt off their obedience, but are ſtill attached to their duty, yet thoſe travellers who have ſeen the corps whoſe conduct is the beſt, rather obſerve in them the abſence of mutiny than the exiſtence of diſcipline.

I cannot help pauſing here for a moment, to reflect upon the expreſſions of ſurpriſe which this miniſter has let fall, relative to the exceſſes he relates. To him the departure of the troops from their ancient principles of loyalty and honour ſeems quite inconceivable. Surely thoſe to whom he addreſſes himſelf know the cauſes of it but too well. They know the doctrines which they have preached, the decrees which they have paſſed, the practices which they have countenanced. The ſoldiers remember the 6th of October. They recollect the French guards. They have not forgot the

the taking of the king's caſtles in Paris, and at Marſeilles. That the governours in both places were murdered with impunity, is a fact that has not paſſed out of their minds. They do not abandon the principles laid down ſo oſtentatiouſly and laboriouſly of the equality of men. They cannot ſhut their eyes to the degradation of the whole nobleſſe of France; and the ſuppreſſion of the very idea of a gentleman. The total abolition of titles and diſtinctions is not loſt upon them. But M. du Pin is aſtoniſhed at their diſloyalty, when the doctors of the aſſembly have taught them at the ſame time the reſpect due to laws. It is eaſy to judge which of the two ſorts of leſſons men with arms in their hands are likely to learn. As to the authority of the king, we may collect from the miniſter himſelf (if any argument on that head were not quite ſuperfluous) that it is not of more conſideration with theſe troops, than it is with every body elſe. "The king," ſays he, "has over and over again repeated his orders to "put a ſtop to theſe exceſſes: but, in ſo terrible "a criſis, *your* [the aſſembly's] concurrence is be- "come indiſpenſably neceſſary to prevent the evils "which menace the ſtate. *You* unite to the force "of the legiſlative power, *that of opinion* ſtill "more important." To be ſure the army can have no opinion of the power or authority of the king. Perhaps the ſoldier has by this time learned,

learned, that the aſſembly itſelf does not enjoy a much greater degree of liberty than that royal figure.

It is now to be ſeen what has been propoſed in this exigency, one of the greateſt that can happen in a ſtate. The miniſter requeſts the aſſembly to array itſelf in all its terrours, and to call forth all its majeſty. He deſires that the grave and ſevere principles announced by them may give vigour to the king's proclamation. After this we ſhould have looked for courts civil and martial; breaking of ſome corps, decimating others, and all the terrible means which neceſſity has employed in ſuch caſes to arreſt the progreſs of the moſt terrible of all evils; particularly, one might expect, that a ſerious inquiry would be made into the murder of commandants in the view of their ſoldiers. Not one word of all this, or of any thing like it. After they had been told that the ſoldiery trampled upon the decrees of the aſſembly promulgated by the king, the aſſembly paſs new decrees; and they authorize the king to make new proclamations. After the ſecretary at war had ſtated that the regiments had paid no regard to oaths *prêtés avec la plus impoſante ſolemnité*—they propoſe—what? More oaths. They renew decrees and proclamations as they experience their inſufficiency, and they multiply oaths in proportion as they weaken, in the minds of men, the ſanctions of religion.

religion. I hope that handy abridgments of the excellent ſermons of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Helvetius, on the Immortality of the Soul, on a particular ſuperintending Providence, and on a Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, are ſent down to the ſoldiers along with their civick oaths. Of this I have no doubt; as I underſtand that a certain deſcription of reading makes no inconſiderable part of their military exerciſes, and that they are full as well ſupplied with the ammunition of pamphlets as of cartridges.

To prevent the miſchiefs ariſing from conſpiracies, irregular conſultations, ſeditious committees, and monſtrous democratick aſſemblies ['co-'mitia, comices'] of the ſoldiers, and all the diſorders ariſing from idleneſs, luxury, diſſipation, and inſubordination, I believe the moſt aſtoniſhing means have been uſed that ever occurred to men, even in all the inventions of this prolifick age. It is no leſs than this:—The king has promulgated in circular letters to all the regiments his direct authority and encouragement, that the ſeveral corps ſhould join themſelves with the clubs and confederations in the ſeveral municipalities, and mix with them in their feaſts and civick entertainments! This jolly diſcipline, it ſeems, is to ſoften the ferocity of their minds; to reconcile them to their bottle companions of other deſcriptions; and to merge particular conſpiracies in more

more general aſſociations *. That this remedy would be pleaſing to the ſoldiers, as they are deſcribed by M. de la Tour du Pin, I can readily believe; and that, however mutinous otherwiſe, they will dutifully ſubmit themſelves to *theſe* royal proclamations. But I ſhould queſtion whether all this civick ſwearing, clubbing, and feaſting, would diſpoſe them more than at preſent they are diſpoſed, to an obedience to their officers; or teach them better to ſubmit to the auſtere rules of military diſcipline. It will make them admirable citizens after the French mode, but not quite ſo good ſoldiers after any mode. A doubt might well ariſe, whether the converſations at theſe good tables would fit them a great deal the better for the character of *mere inſtruments*, which this veteran officer and ſtateſman juſtly obſerves the nature of things always requires an army to be.

Concerning the likelihood of this improvement in diſcipline, by the free converſation of the ſoldiers with the municipal feſtive ſocieties, which is

* Comme ſa majeſté y a reconnu, non une ſyſtême d'aſſociations particulières, mais une réunion de volontés de tous les François pour la liberté et la proſpérité communes, ainſi pour la maintien de l'ordre publique; il a penſé qu'il convenoit que chaque régiment prit part à ces fêtes civiques pour multiplier les rapports, et reſerrer les liens d'union entre les citoyens et les troupes.—Leſt I ſhould not be credited, I inſert the words, authorizing the troops to feaſt with the popular confederacies.

thus

thus officially encouraged by royal authority and ſanction, we may judge by the ſtate of the municipalities themſelves, furniſhed to us by the war miniſter in this very ſpeech. He conceives good hopes of the ſucceſs of his endeavours towards reſtoring order *for the preſent* from the good diſpoſition of certain regiments; but he finds ſomething cloudy with regard to the future. As to preventing the return of confuſion, "for this, the "adminiſtration (ſays he) cannot be anſwerable "to you, as long as they ſee the municipalities "arrogate to themſelves an authority over the "troops, which your inſtitutions have reſerved "wholly to the monarch. You have fixed the "limits of the military authority and the muni-"cipal authority. You have bounded the action, "which you have permitted to the latter over "the former, to the right of requiſition; but "never did the letter or the ſpirit of your decrees "authorize the commons in theſe municipalities "to break the officers, to try them, to give orders "to the ſoldiers, to drive them from the poſts "committed to their guard, to ſtop them in their "marches ordered by the king, or, in a word, to "enſlave the troops to the caprice of each of the "cities or even market towns through which they "are to paſs."

Such is the character and diſpoſition of the municipal ſociety which is to reclaim the ſoldiery, to bring

bring them back to the true principles of military ſubordination, and to render them machines in the hands of the ſupreme power of the country! Such are the diſtempers of the French troops! Such is their cure! As the army is, ſo is the navy. The municipalities ſuperſede the orders of the aſſembly, and the ſeamen in their turn ſuperſede the orders of the municipalities. From my heart I pity the condition of a reſpectable ſervant of the publick, like this war miniſter, obliged in his old age to pledge the aſſembly in their civick cups, and to enter with a hoary head into all the fantaſtick vagaries of theſe juvenile politicians. Such ſchemes are not like propoſitions coming from a man of fifty years wear and tear amongſt mankind. They ſeem rather ſuch as ought to be expected from thoſe grand compounders in politicks, who ſhorten the road to their degrees in the ſtate; and have a certain inward fanatical aſſurance and illumination upon all ſubjects; upon the credit of which one of their doctors has thought fit, with great applauſe, and greater ſucceſs, to caution the aſſembly not to attend to old men, or to any perſons who valued themſelves upon their experience. I ſuppoſe all the miniſters of ſtate muſt qualify, and take this teſt; wholly abjuring the errours and hereſies of experience and obſervation. Every man has his own reliſh. But I think if I could not attain to the wiſdom, I would at leaſt preſerve

ſomething

ſomething of the ſtiff and peremptory dignity of age. Theſe gentlemen deal in regeneration; but at any price I ſhould hardly yield my rigid fibres to be regenerated by them; nor begin, in my grand climacterick, to ſquall in their new accents, or to ſtammer, in my ſecond cradle, the elemental ſounds of their barbarous metaphyſicks*. *Si iſti mihi largiantur ut repueriſcam, et in eorum cunis vagiam, valde recuſem!*

The imbecility of any part of the puerile and pedantick ſyſtem, which they call a conſtitution, cannot be laid open without diſcovering the utter inſufficiency and miſchief of every other part with which it comes in contact, or that bears any the remoteſt relation to it. You cannot propoſe a remedy for the incompetence of the crown, without diſplaying the debility of the aſſembly. You cannot deliberate on the confuſion of the army of the ſtate, without diſcloſing the worſe diſorders of the armed municipalities. The military lays open the civil, and the civil betrays the military anarchy. I wiſh every body carefully to peruſe the eloquent ſpeech (ſuch it is) of Monſ. de la Tour du Pin. He attributes the ſalvation of the municipalities to the good behaviour of ſome of the troops. Theſe troops are to preſerve the well-diſpoſed part of the municipalities, which is confeſſed to be

* The war-miniſter has ſince quitted the ſchool and reſigned his office.

the weakeſt, from the pillage of the worſe diſpoſed, which is the ſtrongeſt. But the municipalities affect a ſovereignty, and will command thoſe troops which are neceſſary for their protection. Indeed they muſt command them or court them. The municipalities, by the neceſſity of their ſituation, and by the republican powers they have obtained, muſt, with relation to the military, be the maſters, or the ſervants, or the confederates, or each ſucceſſively; or they muſt make a jumble of all together, according to circumſtances. What government is there to coerce the army but the municipality, or the municipality but the army? To preſerve concord where authority is extinguiſhed, at the hazard of all conſequences, the aſſembly attempts to cure the diſtempers by the diſtempers themſelves; and they hope to preſerve themſelves from a purely military democracy, by giving it a debauched intereſt in the municipal.

If the ſoldiers once come to mix for any time in the municipal clubs, cabals and confederacies, an elective attraction will draw them to the loweſt and moſt deſperate part. With them will be their habits, affections, and ſympathies. The military conſpiracies, which are to be remedied by civick confederacies; the rebellious municipalities, which are to be rendered obedient by furniſhing them with the means of ſeducing the very armies of the ſtate that are to keep them in order; all theſe chimera-

chimeras of a monſtrous and portentous policy, muſt aggravate the confuſion from which they have ariſen. There muſt be blood. The want of common judgment manifeſted in the conſtruction of all their deſcriptions of forces, and in all their kinds of civil and judicial authorities, will make it flow. Diſorders may be quieted in one time and in one part. They will break out in others; becauſe the evil is radical and intrinſick. All theſe ſchemes of mixing mutinous ſoldiers with ſeditious citizens, muſt weaken ſtill more and more the military connection of ſoldiers with their officers, as well as add military and mutinous audacity to turbulent artificers and peaſants. To ſecure a real army,-the officer ſhould be firſt and laſt in the eye of the ſoldier; firſt and laſt in his attention, obſervance and eſteem. Officers it ſeems there are to be, whoſe chief qualification muſt be temper and patience. They are to manage their troops by electioneering arts. They muſt bear themſelves as candidates not as commanders. But as by ſuch means power may be occaſionally in their hands, the authority by which they are to be nominated becomes of high importance.

What you may do finally does not appear; nor is it of much moment, whilſt the ſtrange and contradictory relation between your army and all the parts of your republick, as well as the puzzled relation of thoſe parts to each other and to the whole,

remain as they are. You ſeem to have given the proviſional nomination of the officers, in the firſt inſtance, to the king, with a reſerve of approbation by the national aſſembly. Men who have an intereſt to purſue are extremely ſagacious in diſcovering the true ſeat of power. They muſt ſoon perceive that thoſe who can negative indefinitely, in reality appoint. The officers muſt therefore look to their intrigues in the aſſembly, as the ſole certain road to promotion. Still, however, by your new conſtitution they muſt begin their ſolicitation at court. This double negociation for military rank ſeems to me a contrivance as well adapted, as if it were ſtudied for no other end, to promote faction in the aſſembly itſelf, relative to this vaſt military patronage; and then to poiſon the corps of officers with factions of a nature ſtill more dangerous to the ſafety of government, upon any bottom on which it can be placed, and deſtructive in the end to the efficacy of the army itſelf. Thoſe officers, who loſe the promotions intended for them by the crown, muſt become of a faction oppoſite to that of the aſſembly which has rejected their claims, and muſt nouriſh diſcontents in the heart of the army againſt the ruling powers. Thoſe officers, on the other hand, who, by carrying their point through an intereſt in the aſſembly, feel themſelves to be at beſt only ſecond in the good-will of the crown, though firſt in that of the

the aſſembly, muſt ſlight an authority which would not advance and could not retard their promotion. If to avoid theſe evils you will have no other rule for command or promotion than ſeniority, you will have an army of formality; at the ſame time it will become more independent, and more of a military republick. Not they, but the king is the machine. A king is not to be depoſed by halves. If he is not every thing in the command of an army, he is nothing. What is the effect of a power placed nominally at the head of the army, who to that army is no object of gratitude, or of fear? Such a cypher is not fit for the adminiſtration of an object, of all things the moſt delicate, the ſupreme command of military men. They muſt be conſtrained (and their inclinations lead them to what their neceſſities require) by a real, vigorous, effective, decided, perſonal authority. The authority of the aſſembly itſelf ſuffers by paſſing through ſuch a debilitating channel as they have choſen. The army will not long look to an aſſembly acting through the organ of falſe ſhew, and palpable impoſition. They will not ſeriouſly yield obedience to a priſoner. They will either deſpiſe a pageant, or they will pity a captive king. This relation of your army to the crown will, if I am not greatly miſtaken, become a ſerious dilemma in your politicks.

It is beſides to be conſidered, whether an aſſem-

bly like yours, even ſuppoſing that it was in poſſeſſion of another ſort of organ through which its orders were to paſs, is fit for promoting the obedience and diſcipline of an army. It is known, that armies have hitherto yielded a very precarious and uncertain obedience to any ſenate, or popular authority; and they will leaſt of all yield it to an aſſembly which is only to have a continuance of two years. The officers muſt totally loſe the characteriſtick diſpoſition of military men, if they ſee with perfect ſubmiſſion and due admiration, the dominion of pleaders; eſpecially when they find, that they have a new court to pay to an endleſs ſucceſſion of thoſe pleaders; whoſe military policy, and the genius of whoſe command (if they ſhould have any) muſt be as uncertain as their duration is tranſient. In the weakneſs of one kind of authority, and in the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will remain for ſome time mutinous and full of faction, until ſome popular general, who underſtands the art of conciliating the ſoldiery, and who poſſeſſes the true ſpirit of command, ſhall draw the eyes of all men upon himſelf. Armies will obey him on his perſonal account. There is no other way of ſecuring military obedience in this ſtate of things. But the moment in which that event ſhall happen, the perſon who really commands the army is your maſter; the maſter (that is little) of your king, the maſter of your

your aſſembly, the maſter of your whole republick.

How came the aſſembly by their preſent power over the army? Chiefly, to be ſure, by debauching the ſoldiers from their officers. They have begun by a moſt terrible operation. They have touched the central point, about which the particles that compoſe armies are at repoſe. They have deſtroyed the principle of obedience in the great eſſential critical link between the officer and the ſoldier, juſt where the chain of military ſubordination commences, and on which the whole of that ſyſtem depends. The ſoldier is told he is a citizen, and has the rights of man and citizen. The right of a man, he is told, is to be his own governour, and to be ruled only by thoſe to whom he delegates that ſelf-government. It is very natural he ſhould think that he ought moſt of all to have his choice where he is to yield the greateſt degree of obedience. He will therefore, in all probability, ſyſtematically do, what he does at preſent occaſionally; that is, he will exerciſe at leaſt a negative in the choice of his officers. At preſent the officers are known at beſt to be only permiſſive, and on their good behaviour. In fact, there have been many inſtances in which they have been caſhiered by their corps. Here is a ſecond negative on the choice of the king; a negative as effectual at leaſt as the other of the aſſembly. The ſoldiers

know already that it has been a queſtion, not ill received in the national aſſembly, whether they ought not to have the direct choice of their officers, or ſome proportion of them? When ſuch matters are in deliberation it is no extravagant ſuppoſition that they will incline to the opinion moſt favourable to their pretenſions. They will not bear to be deemed the army of an impriſoned king, whilſt another army in the ſame country, with whom too they are to feaſt and confederate, is to be conſidered as the free army of a free conſtitution. They will caſt their eyes on the other and more permanent army; I mean the municipal. That corps, they well know, does actually elect its own officers. They may not be able to diſcern the grounds of diſtinction on which they are not to elect a Marquis de la Fayette (or what is his new name) of their own. If this election of a commander in chief be a part of the rights of men, why not of theirs? They ſee elective juſtices of peace, elective judges, elective curates, elective biſhops, elective municipalities, and elective commanders of the Pariſian army.—Why ſhould they alone be excluded? Are the brave troops of France the only men in that nation who are not the fit judges of military merit, and of the qualifications neceſſary for a commander in chief? Are they paid by the ſtate, and do they therefore loſe the rights of men? They are a part of that nation themſelves,

ſelves, and contribute to that pay. And is not the king, is not the national aſſembly, and are not all who elect the national aſſembly, likewiſe paid? Inſtead of ſeeing all theſe forfeit their rights by their receiving a ſalary, they perceive that in all theſe caſes a ſalary is given for the exerciſe of thoſe rights. All your reſolutions, all your proceedings, all your debates, all the works of your doctors in religion and politicks, have induſtriouſly been put into their hands; and you expect that they will apply to their own caſe juſt as much of your doctrines and examples as ſuits your pleaſure.

Every thing depends upon the army in ſuch a government as yours; for you have induſtriouſly deſtroyed all the opinions, and prejudices, and, as far as in you lay, all the inſtincts which ſupport government. Therefore the moment any difference ariſes between your national aſſembly and any part of the nation, you muſt have recourſe to force. Nothing elſe is left to you; or rather you have left nothing elſe to yourſelves. You ſee by the report of your war miniſter, that the diſtribution of the army is in a great meaſure made with a view of internal coercion *. You muſt rule by an army; and you have infuſed into that army by which you rule, as well as into the whole body of the nation, principles which after a time muſt

* Courier François, 30 July 1790. Aſſemblée Nationale, Numero 210.

diſable

diſable you in the uſe you reſolve to make of it. The king is to call out troops to act againſt his people, when the world has been told, and the aſſertion is ſtill ringing in our ears, that troops ought not to fire on citizens. The colonies aſſert to themſelves an independent conſtitution and a free trade. They muſt be conſtrained by troops. In what chapter of your code of the rights of men are they able to read, that it is a part of the rights of men to have their commerce monopolized and reſtrained for the benefit of others? As the coloniſts riſe on you, the negroes riſe on them. Troops again—Maſſacre, torture, hanging! Theſe are your rights of men! Theſe are the fruits of metaphyſick declarations wantonly made, and ſhamefully retracted! It was but the other day that the farmers of land in one of your provinces refuſed to pay ſome ſorts of rents to the lord of the ſoil. In conſequence of this you decree, that the country people ſhall pay all rents and dues, except thoſe which as grievances you have aboliſhed; and if they refuſe, then you order the king to march troops againſt them. You lay down metaphyſick propoſitions which infer univerſal conſequences, and then you attempt to limit logick by deſpotiſm. The leaders of the preſent ſyſtem tell them of their rights, as men, to take fortreſſes, to murder guards, to ſeize on kings without the leaſt appearance of authority even from the aſſembly,

whilſt, as the ſovereign legiſlative body, that aſſembly was ſitting in the name of the nation—and yet theſe leaders preſume to order out the troops which have acted in theſe very diſorders, to coerce thoſe who ſhall judge on the principles, and follow the examples, which have been guaranteed by their own approbation.

The leaders teach the people to abhor and reject all feodality as the barbariſm of tyranny, and they tell them afterwards how much of that barbarous tyranny they are to bear with patience. As they are prodigal of light with regard to grievances, ſo the people find them ſparing in the extreme with regard to redreſs. They know that not only certain quit-rents and perſonal duties, which you have permitted them to redeem (but have furniſhed no money for the redemption) are as nothing to thoſe burthens for which you have made no proviſion at all. They know, that almoſt the whole ſyſtem of landed property in its origin is feudal; that it is the diſtribution of the poſſeſſions of the original proprietors, made by a barbarous conqueror to his barbarous inſtruments; and that the moſt grievous effects of the conqueſt are the land rents of every kind, as without queſtion they are.

The peaſants, in all probability, are the deſcendants of theſe ancient proprietors, Romans or Gauls. But if they fail, in any degree, in the titles

titles which they make on the principles of antiquaries and lawyers, they retreat into the citadel of the rights of men. There they find that men are equal; and the earth, the kind and equal mother of all, ought not to be monopolized to foſter the pride and luxury of any men, who by nature are no better than themſelves, and who, if they do not labour for their bread, are worſe. They find, that by the laws of nature the occupant and ſubduer of the ſoil is the true proprietor; that there is no preſcription againſt nature; and that the agreements (where any there are) which have been made with the landlords, during the time of ſlavery, are only the effect of dureſſe and force; and that when the people re-entered into the rights of men, thoſe agreements were made as void, as every thing elſe which had been ſettled under the prevalence of the old feudal and ariſtocratick tyranny. They will tell you that they ſee no difference between an idler with a hat and a national cockade, and an idler in a cowl or in a rochet. If you ground the title to rents on ſucceſſion and preſcription, they tell you from the ſpeech of Mr. *Camus*, publiſhed by the national aſſembly for their information, that things ill begun cannot avail themſelves of preſcription; that the title of theſe lords was vicious in its origin; and that force is at leaſt as bad as fraud. As to the title by ſucceſſion, they will tell you, that the ſucceſſion of thoſe who

who have cultivated the ſoil is the true pedigree of property, and not rotten parchments and ſilly ſubſtitutions; that the lords have enjoyed their uſurpation too long; and that if they allow to theſe lay monks any charitable penſion, they ought to be thankful to the bounty of the true proprietor, who is ſo generous towards a falſe claimant to his goods.

When the peaſants give you back that coin of ſophiſtick reaſon, on which you have ſet your image and ſuperſcription, you cry it down as baſe money, and tell them you will pay for the future with French guards, and dragoons, and huſſars. You hold up, to chaſtiſe them, the ſecond-hand authority of a king, who is only the inſtrument of deſtroying, without any power of protecting either the people or his own perſon. Through him it ſeems you will make yourſelves obeyed. They anſwer, You have taught us that there are no gentlemen; and which of your principles teach us to bow to kings whom we have not elected? We know, without your teaching, that lands were given for the ſupport of feudal dignities, feudal titles, and feudal offices. When you took down the cauſe as a grievance, why ſhould the more grievous effect remain? As there are now no hereditary honours, and no diſtinguiſhed families, why are we taxed to maintain what you tell us ought not to exiſt? You have ſent down our old

old ariſtocratick landlords in no other character, and with no other title, but that of exactors under your authority. Have you endeavoured to make theſe your rent-gatherers reſpectable to us? No. You have ſent them to us with their arms reverſed, their ſhields broken, their impreſſes defaced; and ſo diſplumed, degraded, and metamorphoſed, ſuch unfeathered two-legged things, that we no longer know them. They are ſtrangers to us. They do not even go by the names of our ancient lords. Phyſically they may be the ſame men; though we are not quite ſure of that, on your new philoſophick doctrines of perſonal identity. In all other reſpects they are totally changed. We do not ſee why we have not as good a right to refuſe them their rents, as you have to abrogate all their honours, titles, and diſtinctions. This we have never commiſſioned you to do; and it is one inſtance, among many indeed, of your aſſumption of undelegated power. We ſee the burghers of Paris, through their clubs, their mobs, and their national guards, directing you at their pleaſure, and giving that as law to you, which, under your authority, is tranſmitted as law to us. Through you, theſe burghers diſpoſe of the lives and fortunes of us all. Why ſhould not you attend as much to the deſires of the laborious huſbandman with regard to our rent, by which we are affected in the moſt ſerious manner, as you do

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to the demands of theſe inſolent burghers, relative to diſtinctions and titles of honour, by which neither they nor we are affected at all? But we find you pay more regard to their fancies than to our neceſſities. Is it among the rights of man to pay tribute to his equals? Before this meaſure of yours, we might have thought we were not perfectly equal. We might have entertained ſome old, habitual, unmeaning prepoſſeſſion in favour of thoſe landlords; but we cannot conceive with what other view than that of deſtroying all reſpect to them, you could have made the law that degrades them. You have forbidden us to treat them with any of the old formalities of reſpect, and now you ſend troops to ſabre and to bayonet us into a ſubmiſſion to fear and force, which you did not ſuffer us to yield to the mild authority of opinion.

The ground of ſome of theſe arguments is horrid and ridiculous to all rational ears; but to the politicians of metaphyſicks who have opened ſchools for ſophiſtry, and made eſtabliſhments for anarchy, it is ſolid and concluſive. It is obvious, that on a mere conſideration of the right, the leaders in the aſſembly would not in the leaſt have ſcrupled to abrogate the rents along with the titles and family enſigns. It would be only to follow up the principle of their reaſonings, and to complete

plete the analogy of their conduct. But they had newly poſſeſſed themſelves of a great body of landed property by confiſcation. They had this commodity at market; and the market would have been wholly deſtroyed, if they were to permit the huſbandmen to riot in the ſpeculations with which they ſo freely intoxicated themſelves. The only ſecurity which property enjoys in any one of its deſcriptions, is from the intereſts of their rapacity with regard to ſome other. They have left nothing but their own arbitrary pleaſure to determine what property is to be protected and what ſubverted.

Neither have they left any principle by which any of their municipalities can be bound to obedience; or even conſcientiouſly obliged not to ſeparate from the whole to become independent, or to connect itſelf with ſome other ſtate. The people of Lyons, it ſeems, have refuſed lately to pay taxes. Why ſhould they not? What lawful authority is there left to exact them? The king impoſed ſome of them. The old ſtates, methodized by orders, ſettled the more ancient. They may ſay to the aſſembly, Who are you, that are not our kings, nor the ſtates we have elected, nor ſit on the principles on which we have elected you? And who are we, that when we ſee the gabelles which you have ordered to be paid, wholly

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ſhaken off, when we ſee the act of diſobedience afterwards ratified by yourſelves,—who are we, that we are not to judge what taxes we ought or ought not to pay, and are not to avail ourſelves of the ſame powers, the validity of which you have approved in others? To this the anſwer is, We will ſend troops. The laſt reaſon of kings, is always the firſt with your aſſembly. This military aid may ſerve for a time, whilſt the impreſſion of the increaſe of pay remains, and the vanity of being umpires in all diſputes is flattered. But this weapon will ſnap ſhort, unfaithful to the hand that employs it. The aſſembly keep a ſchool where, ſyſtematically, and with unremitting perſeverance, they teach principles, and form regulations deſtructive to all ſpirit of ſubordination, civil and military—and then they expect that they ſhall hold in obedience an anarchick people by an anarchick army.

The municipal army, which, according to their new policy, is to balance this national army, if conſidered in itſelf only, is of a conſtitution much more ſimple, and in every reſpect leſs exceptionable. It is a mere democratick body, unconnected with the crown or the kingdom; armed, and trained, and officered at the pleaſure of the diſtricts to which the corps ſeverally belong; and the perſonal ſervice of the individuals, who compoſe, or the fine in lieu of perſonal ſervice, are directed by

the ſame authority*. Nothing is more uniform. If, however, conſidered in any relation to the crown, to the national aſſembly, to the publick tribunals, or to the other army, or conſidered in a view to any coherence or connection between its parts, it ſeems a monſter, and can hardly fail to terminate its perplexed movements in ſome great national calamity. It is a worſe preſervative of a general conſtitution, than the ſyſtaſis of Crete, or the confederation of Poland, or any other ill-deviſed corrective which has yet been imagined, in the neceſſities produced by an ill-conſtructed ſyſtem of government.

Having concluded my few remarks on the conſtitution of the ſupreme power, the executive, the judicature, the military, and on the reciprocal relation of all theſe eſtabliſhments, I ſhall ſay ſomething of the ability ſhewed by your legiſlators with regard to the revenue.

In their proceedings relative to this object, if poſſible, ſtill fewer traces appear of political judgment or financial reſource. When the ſtates met,

* I ſee by Mr. Necker's account, that the national guards of Paris have received, over and above the money levied within their own city, about 145,000l. ſterling out of the publick treaſure. Whether this be an actual payment for the nine months of their exiſtence, or an eſtimate of their yearly charge, I do not clearly perceive. It is of no great importance, as certainly they may take whatever they pleaſe.

it ſeemed to be the great object to improve the ſyſtem of revenue, to enlarge its collection, to cleanſe it of oppreſſion and vexation, and to eſtabliſh it on the moſt ſolid footing. Great were the expectations entertained on that head throughout Europe. It was by this grand arrangement that France was to ſtand or fall; and this became, in my opinion, very properly, the teſt by which the ſkill and patriotiſm of thoſe who ruled in that aſſembly would be tried. The revenue of the ſtate is the ſtate. In effect all depends upon it, whether for ſupport or for reformation. The dignity of every occupation wholly depends upon the quantity and the kind of virtue that may be exerted in it. As all great qualities of the mind which operate in publick, and are not merely ſuffering and paſſive, require force for their diſplay, I had almoſt ſaid for their unequivocal exiſtence, the revenue, which is the ſpring of all power, becomes in its adminiſtration the ſphere of every active virtue. Publick virtue, being of a nature magnificent and ſplendid, inſtituted for great things, and converſant about great concerns, requires abundant ſcope and room, and cannot ſpread and grow under confinement, and in circumſtances ſtraitened, narrow, and ſordid. Through the revenue alone the body politick can act in its true genius and character, and therefore it will diſplay juſt as much of its collective virtue, and as much

of that virtue which may characteriſe thoſe who move it, and are, as it were, its life and guiding principle, as it is poſſeſſed of a juſt revenue. For from hence not only magnanimity, and liberality, and beneficence, and fortitude, and providence, and the tutelary protection of all good arts, derive their food, and the growth of their organs, but continence, and ſelf-denial, and labour, and vigilance, and frugality, and whatever elſe there is in which the mind ſhews itſelf above the appetite, are no where more in their proper element than in the proviſion and diſtribution of the public wealth. It is therefore not without reaſon that the ſcience of ſpeculative and practical finance, which muſt take to its aid ſo many auxiliary branches of knowledge, ſtands high in the eſtimation not only of the ordinary ſort, but of the wiſeſt and beſt men; and as this ſcience has grown with the progreſs of its object, the proſperity and improvement of nations has generally increaſed with the increaſe of their revenues; and they will both continue to grow and flouriſh, as long as the balance between what is left to ſtrengthen the efforts of individuals, and what is collected for the common efforts of the ſtate, bear to each other a due reciprocal proportion, and are kept in a cloſe correſpondence and communication. And perhaps it may be owing to the greatneſs of revenues, and to the urgency of ſtate neceſſities, that old abuſes

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in the conſtitution of finances are diſcovered, and their true nature and rational theory comes to be more perfectly underſtood; inſomuch, that a ſmaller revenue might have been more diſtreſſing in one period than a far greater is found to be in another; the proportionate wealth even remaining the ſame. In this ſtate of things, the French aſſembly found ſomething in their revenues to preſerve, to ſecure, and wiſely to adminiſter, as well as to abrogate and alter. Though their proud aſſumption might juſtify the ſevereſt teſts, yet in trying their abilities on their financial proceedings, I would only conſider what is the plain obvious duty of a common finance miniſter, and try them upon that, and not upon models of ideal perfection.

The objects of a financier are, then, to ſecure an ample revenue; to impoſe it with judgment and equality; to employ it œconomically; and when neceſſity obliges him to make uſe of credit, to ſecure its foundations in that inſtance, and for ever, by the clearneſs and candour of his proceedings, the exactneſs of his calculations, and the ſolidity of his funds. On theſe heads we may take a ſhort and diſtinct view of the merits and abilities of thoſe in the national aſſembly, who have taken to themſelves the management of this arduous concern. Far from any increaſe of revenue in their hands, I find, by a report of M. Vernier,

from the committee of finances, of the ſecond of Auguſt laſt, that the amount of the national revenue, as compared with its produce before the revolution, was diminiſhed by the ſum of two hundred millions, or *eight millions ſterling* of the annual income, conſiderably more than one-third of the whole.

If this be the reſult of great ability, never ſurely was ability diſplayed in a more diſtinguiſhed manner, or with ſo powerful an effect. No common folly, no vulgar incapacity, no ordinary official negligence, even no official crime, no corruption, no peculation, hardly any direct hoſtility which we have ſeen in the modern world, could in ſo ſhort a time have made ſo complete an overthrow of the finances, and with them, of the ſtrength of a great kingdom.—*Cedò qui veſtram rempublicam tantam amiſiſtis tam cito?*

The ſophiſters and declaimers, as ſoon as the aſſembly met, began with decrying the ancient conſtitution of the revenue in many of its moſt eſſential branches, ſuch as the publick monopoly of ſalt. They charged it, as truly as unwiſely, with being ill-contrived, oppreſſive, and partial. This repreſentation they were not ſatisfied to make uſe of in ſpeeches preliminary to ſome plan of reform; they declared it in a ſolemn reſolution or publick ſentence, as it were judicially, paſſed upon it; and this they diſperſed throughout the nation. At the time

time they paſſed the decree, with the ſame gravity they ordered this ſame abſurd, oppreſſive, and partial tax to be paid, until they could find a revenue to replace it. The conſequence was inevitable. The provinces which had been always exempted from this ſalt monopoly, ſome of whom were charged with other contributions, perhaps equivalent, were totally diſinclined to bear any part of the burthen, which by an equal diſtribution was to redeem the others. As to the aſſembly, occupied as it was with the declaration and violation of the rights of men, and with their arrangements for general confuſion, it had neither leiſure nor capacity to contrive, nor authority to enforce any plan of any kind relative to the replacing the tax or equalizing it, or compenſating the provinces, or for conducting their minds to any ſcheme of accommodation with the other diſtricts which were to be relieved.

The people of the ſalt provinces, impatient under taxes, damned by the authority which had directed their payment, very ſoon found their patience exhauſted. They thought themſelves as ſkilful in demoliſhing as the aſſembly could be. They relieved themſelves by throwing off the whole burthen. Animated by this example, each diſtrict, or part of a diſtrict, judging of its own grievance by its own feeling, and of its remedy by its own opinion, did as it pleaſed with other taxes.

We are next to ſee how they have conducted themſelves in contriving equal impoſitions, proportioned to the means of the citizens, and the leaſt likely to lean heavy on the active capital employed in the generation of that private wealth, from whence the publick fortune muſt be derived. By ſuffering the ſeveral diſtricts, and ſeveral of the individuals in each diſtrict, to judge of what part of the old revenue they might withhold, inſtead of better principles of equality, a new inequality was introduced of the moſt oppreſſive kind. Payments were regulated by diſpoſitions. The parts of the kingdom which were the moſt ſubmiſſive, the moſt orderly, or the moſt affectionate to the commonwealth, bore the whole burthen of the ſtate. Nothing turns out to be ſo oppreſſive and unjuſt as a feeble government. To fill up all the deficiencies in the old impoſitions, and the new deficiencies of every kind which were to be expected, what remained to a ſtate without authority? The national aſſembly called for a voluntary benevolence; for a fourth part of the income of all the citizens, to be eſtimated on the honour of thoſe who were to pay. They obtained ſomething more than could be rationally calculated, but what was, far indeed, from anſwerable to their real neceſſities, and much leſs to their fond expectations. Rational people could have hoped for little from this their tax in the diſguiſe of a benevolence;

violence; a tax weak, ineffective, and unequal; a tax by which luxury, avarice, and ſelfiſhneſs were ſcreened, and the load thrown upon productive capital, upon integrity, generoſity, and publick ſpirit—a tax of regulation upon virtue. At length the maſk is thrown off, and they are now trying means (with little ſucceſs) of exacting their benevolence by force.

This benevolence, the ricketty offspring of weakneſs, was to be ſupported by another reſource, the twin brother of the ſame prolifick imbecility. The patriotick donations were to make good the failure of the patriotick contribution. John Doe was to become ſecurity for Richard Roe. By this ſcheme they took things of much price from the giver, comparatively of ſmall value to the receiver; they ruined ſeveral trades; they pillaged the crown of its ornaments, the churches of their plate, and the people of their perſonal decorations. The invention of theſe juvenile pretenders to liberty, was in reality nothing more than a ſervile imitation of one of the pooreſt reſources of doting deſpotiſm. They took an old huge full-bottomed perriwig out of the wardrobe of the antiquated frippery of Louis the Fourteenth, to cover the premature baldneſs of the national aſſembly. They produced this old-faſhioned formal folly, though it had been ſo abundantly expoſed in the Memoirs of the Duke de St. Simon, if to reaſonable men it had wanted any

any arguments to diſplay its miſchief and inſufficiency. A device of the ſame kind was tried in my memory by Louis the Fifteenth, but it anſwered at no time. However, the neceſſities of ruinous wars were ſome excuſe for deſperate projects. The deliberations of calamity are rarely wiſe. But here was a ſeaſon for diſpoſition and providence. It was in a time of profound peace, then enjoyed for five years, and promiſing a much longer continuance, that they had recourſe to this deſperate trifling. They were ſure to loſe more reputation by ſporting, in their ſerious ſituation, with theſe toys and playthings of finance, which have filled half their journals, than could poſſibly be compenſated by the poor temporary ſupply which they afforded. It ſeemed as if thoſe who adopted ſuch projects were wholly ignorant of their circumſtances, or wholly unequal to their neceſſities. Whatever virtue may be in theſe devices, it is obvious that neither the patriotick gifts, nor the patriotick contribution, can ever be reſorted to again. The reſources of publick folly are ſoon exhauſted. The whole indeed of their ſcheme of revenue is to make, by any artifice, an appearance of a full reſervoir for the hour, whilſt at the ſame time they cut off the ſprings and living fountains of perennial ſupply. The account not long ſince furniſhed by Mr. Necker was meant, without queſtion, to be favourable. He gives a flattering view of the means

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of getting through the year; but he expreſſes, as it is natural he ſhould, ſome apprehenſion for that which was to ſucceed. On this laſt prognoſtick, inſtead of entering into the grounds of this apprehenſion, in order by a proper foreſight, to prevent the prognoſticated evil, Mr. Necker receives a ſort of friendly reprimand from the preſident of the aſſembly.

As to their other ſchemes of taxation, it is impoſſible to ſay any thing of them with certainty; becauſe they have not yet had their operation; but nobody is ſo ſanguine as to imagine they will fill up any perceptible part of the wide gaping breach which their incapacity has made in their revenues. At preſent the ſtate of their treaſury ſinks every day more and more in caſh, and ſwells more and more in fictitious repreſentation. When ſo little within or without is now found but paper, the repreſentative not of opulence but of want, the creature not of credit but of power, they imagine that our flouriſhing ſtate in England is owing to that bank-paper, and not the bank-paper to the flouriſhing condition of our commerce, to the ſolidity of our credit, and to the total excluſion of all idea of power from any part of the tranſaction. They forget that, in England, not one ſhilling of paper-money of any deſcription is received but of choice; that the whole has had its origin in caſh actually depoſited; and that it

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is convertible, at pleaſure, in an inſtant, and without the ſmalleſt loſs, into caſh again. Our paper is of value in commerce, becauſe in law it is of none. It is powerful on Change, becauſe in Weſtminſter-hall it is impotent. In payment of a debt of twenty ſhillings, a creditor may refuſe all the paper of the bank of England. Nor is there amongſt us a ſingle publick ſecurity, of any quality or nature whatſoever, that is enforced by authority. In fact it might be eaſily ſhewn, that our paper wealth, inſtead of leſſening the real coin, has a tendency to increaſe it; inſtead of being a ſubſtitute for money, it only facilitate its entry, its exit, and its circulation; that it is the ſymbol of proſperity, and not the badge of diſtreſs. Never was a ſcarcity of caſh, and an exuberance of paper, a ſubject of complaint in this nation.

Well! but a leſſening of prodigal expences, and the œconomy which has been introduced by the virtuous and ſapient aſſembly, make amends for the loſſes ſuſtained in the receipt of revenue. In this at leaſt they have fulfilled the duty of a financier.—Have thoſe, who ſay ſo, looked at the expences of the national aſſembly itſelf? of the municipalities? of the city of Paris? of the increaſed pay of the two armies? of the new police? of the new judicatures? Have they even carefully compared the preſent penſion-liſt with the former? Theſe politicians have been cruel, not œconomical.

Comparing

Comparing the expences of the former prodigal government and its relation to the then revenues with the expences of this new ſyſtem as oppoſed to the ſtate of its new treaſury, I believe the preſent will be found beyond all compariſon more chargeable *.

It remains only to conſider the proofs of financial ability, furniſhed by the preſent French managers when they are to raiſe ſupplies on credit. Here I am a little at a ſtand; for credit, properly ſpeaking, they have none. The credit of the ancient government was not indeed the beſt; but they could always, on ſome terms, command mo-

* The reader will obſerve, that I have but lightly touched (my plan demanded nothing more) on the condition of the French Finances, as connected with the demands upon them. If I had intended to do otherwiſe, the materials in my hands for ſuch a taſk are not altogether perfect. On this ſubject I refer the reader to M. de Calonne's work; and the tremendous diſplay that he has made of the havock and devaſtation in the publick eſtate, and in all the affairs of France, cauſed by the preſumptuous good intentions of ignorance and incapacity. Such effects, thoſe cauſes will always produce. Looking over that account with a pretty ſtrict eye, and, with perhaps too much rigour, deducting every thing which may be placed to the account of a financier out of place, who might be ſuppoſed by his enemies deſirous of making the moſt of his cauſe, I believe it will be found, that a more ſalutary leſſon of caution againſt the daring ſpirit of innovators than what has been ſupplied at the expence of France, never was at any time furniſhed to mankind.

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ney, not only at home, but from moſt of the countries of Europe where a ſurplus capital was accumulated; and the credit of that government was improving daily. The eſtabliſhment of a ſyſtem of liberty would of courſe be ſuppoſed to give it new ſtrength; and ſo it would actually have done, if a ſyſtem of liberty had been eſtabliſhed. What offers has their government of pretended liberty had from Holland, from Hamburgh, from Switzerland, from Genoa, from England, for a dealing in their paper? Why ſhould theſe nations of commerce and œconomy enter into any pecuniary dealings with a people, who attempt to reverſe the very nature of things; amongſt whom they ſee the debtor preſcribing, at the point of the bayonet, the medium of his ſolvency to the creditor; diſcharging one of his engagements with another; turning his very penury into his reſource; and paying his intereſt with his rags?

Their fanatical confidence in the omnipotence of church plunder, has induced theſe philoſophers to overlook all care of the publick eſtate, juſt as the dream of the philoſopher's ſtone induces dupes, under the more plauſible deluſion of the hermetick art, to neglect all rational means of improving their fortunes. With theſe philoſophick financiers, this univerſal medicine made of church mummy is to cure all the evils of the ſtate. Theſe gentlemen perhaps do not believe a great

deal in the miracles of piety; but it cannot be queſtioned, that they have an undoubting faith in the prodigies of ſacrilege. Is there a debt which preſſes them—Iſſue *aſſignats.* Are compenſations to be made, or a maintenance decreed to thoſe whom they have robbed of their freehold in their office, or expelled from their profeſſion—*Aſſignats.* Is a fleet to be fitted out—*Aſſignats.* If ſixteen millions ſterling of theſe *aſſignats*, forced on the people, leave the wants of the ſtate as urgent as ever—iſſue, ſays one, thirty millions ſterling of *aſſignats*—ſays another, iſſue fourſcore millions more of *aſſignats.* The only difference among their financial factions is on the greater or the leſſer quantity of *aſſignats* to be impoſed on the publick ſufferance. They are all profeſſors of *aſſignats.* Even thoſe, whoſe natural good ſenſe and knowledge of commerce, not obliterated by philoſophy, furniſh deciſive arguments againſt this deluſion, conclude their arguments, by propoſing the emiſſion of *aſſignats.* I ſuppoſe they muſt talk of *aſſignats*, as no other language would be underſtood. All experience of their inefficacy does not in the leaſt diſcourage them. Are the old *aſſignats* depreciated at market? What is the remedy? Iſſue new *aſſignats.—Mais ſi maladia, opiniatria, non vult ſe garire, quid illi facere? aſſignare—poſtea aſſignare; enſuita aſſignare.* The word is a trifle altered. The Latin of your preſent doctors may be

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better than that of your old comedy; their wiſdom, and the variety of their reſources, are the ſame. They have not more notes in their ſong than the cuckow; though, far from the ſoftneſs of that harbinger of ſummer and plenty, their voice is as harſh and as ominous as that of the raven.

Who but the moſt deſperate adventurers in philoſophy and finance could at all have thought of deſtroying the ſettled revenue of the ſtate, the ſole ſecurity for the publick credit, in the hope of rebuilding it with the materials of confiſcated property? If, however, an exceſſive zeal for the ſtate ſhould have led a pious and venerable prelate (by anticipation a father of the church*) to pillage his own order, and, for the good of the church and people, to take upon himſelf the place of grand financier of confiſcation, and comptroller general of ſacrilege, he and his coadjutors were, in my opinion, bound to ſhew, by their ſubſequent conduct, that they knew ſomething of the office they aſſumed. When they had reſolved to appropriate to the *Fiſc*, a certain portion of the landed property of their conquered country, it was their buſineſs to render their bank a real fund of credit; as far as ſuch a bank was capable of becoming ſo.

To eſtabliſh a current circulating credit upon any *Land-bank*, under any circumſtances whatſo-

* La Bruyere of Boſſuet.

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ever, has hitherto proved difficult at the very leaſt. The attempt has commonly ended in bankruptcy. But when the aſſembly were led, through a contempt of moral, to a defiance of œconomical principles, it might at leaſt have been expected, that nothing would be omitted on their part to leſſen this difficulty, to prevent any aggravation of this bankruptcy. It might be expected, that to render your *Land-bank* tolerable, every means would be adopted that could diſplay openneſs and candour in the ſtatement of the ſecurity; every thing which could aid the recovery of the demand. To take things in their moſt favourable point of view, your condition was that of a man of a large landed eſtate, which he wiſhed to diſpoſe of for the diſcharge of a debt, and the ſupply of certain ſervices. Not being able inſtantly to ſell, you wiſhed to mortgage. What would a man of fair intentions, and a commonly clear underſtanding, do in ſuch circumſtances? Ought he not firſt to aſcertain the groſs value of the eſtate; the charges of its management and diſpoſition; the encumbrances perpetual and temporary of all kinds that affect it; then, ſtriking a net ſurplus, to calculate the juſt value of the ſecurity? When that ſurplus (the only ſecurity to the creditor) had been clearly aſcertained, and properly veſted in the hands of truſtees; then he would indicate the parcels to be ſold, and the time and conditions of ſale; after

this, he would admit the publick creditor, if he chofe it, to fubfcribe his ſtock into this new fund; or he might receive propoſals for an *aſſignat* from thoſe who would advance money to purchaſe this ſpecies of ſecurity.

This would be to proceed like men of buſineſs, methodically and rationally; and on the only principles of publick and private credit that have an exiſtence. The dealer would then know exactly what he purchaſed; and the only doubt which could hang upon his mind would be, the dread of the reſumption of the ſpoil, which one day might be made (perhaps with an addition of puniſhment) from the ſacrilegious gripe of thoſe execrable wretches who could become purchaſers at the auction of their innocent fellow-citizens.

An open and exact ſtatement of the clear value of the property, and of the time, the circumſtances, and the place of ſale, were all neceſſary, to efface as much as poſſible the ſtigma that has hitherto been branded on every kind of Land-bank. It became neceſſary on another principle, that is, on account of a pledge of faith previouſly given on that ſubject, that their future fidelity in a ſlippery concern might be eſtabliſhed by their adherence to their firſt engagement. When they had finally determined on a ſtate reſource from church booty, they came, on the 14th of April 1790, to a ſolemn reſolution on the ſubject; and pledged

pledged themſelves to their country, "that in the "ſtatement of the publick charges for each year, "there ſhould be brought to account a ſum ſuffi- "cient for defraying the expences of the R. C. A. "religion, the ſupport of the miniſters at the al- "tars, the relief of the poor, the penſions to the "eccleſiaſticks, ſecular as well as regular, of the "one and of the other ſex, *in order that the eſtates* "*and goods which are at the diſpoſal of the nation* "*may be diſengaged of all charges, and employed* "*by the repreſentatives, or the legiſlative body,* "*to the great and moſt preſſing exigencies of the* "*ſtate.*" They further engaged, on the ſame day, that the ſum neceſſary for the year 1791 ſhould be forthwith determined.

In this reſolution they admit it their duty to ſhew diſtinctly the expence of the above objects; which, by other reſolutions, they had before engaged ſhould be firſt in the order of proviſion. They admit that they ought to ſhew the eſtate clear and diſengaged of all charges, and that they ſhould ſhew it immediately. Have they done this immediately, or at any time? Have they ever furniſhed a rent-roll of the immoveable eſtates, or given in an inventory of the moveable effects which they confiſcate to their aſſignats? In what manner they can fulfil their engagements of holding out to publick ſervice "an eſtate diſengaged "of all charges," without authenticating the value

of the eſtate, or the quantum of the charges, I leave it to their Engliſh admirers to explain. Inſtantly upon this aſſurance, and previouſly to any one ſtep towards making it good, they iſſue, on the credit of ſo handſome a declaration, ſixteen millions ſterling of their paper. This was manly. Who, after this maſterly ſtroke, can doubt of their abilities in finance?—But then, before any other emiſſion of theſe financial *indulgences*, they took care at leaſt to make good their original promiſe!—If ſuch eſtimate, either of the value of the eſtate or the amount of the incumbrances, has been made, it has eſcaped me. I never heard of it.

At length they have ſpoken out, and they have made a full diſcovery of their abominable fraud, in holding out the church lands as a ſecurity for any debts or any ſervice whatſoever. They rob only to enable them to cheat; but in a very ſhort time they defeat the ends both of the robbery and the fraud, by making out accounts for other purpoſes, which blow up their whole apparatus of force and of deception. I am obliged to M. de Calonne for his reference to the document which proves this extraordinary fact: it had by ſome means eſcaped me. Indeed it was not neceſſary to make out my aſſertion as to the breach of faith on the declaration of the 14th of April 1790. By a report of their committee it now appears, that

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the charge of keeping up the reduced eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhments, and other expences attendant on religion, and maintaining the religious of both ſexes, retained or penſioned, and the other concomitant expences of the ſame nature, which they have brought upon themſelves by this convulſion in property, exceeds the income of the eſtates acquired by it in the enormous ſum of two millions ſterling annually; beſides a debt of ſeven millions and upwards. Theſe are the calculating powers of impoſture! This is the finance of philoſophy! This is the reſult of all the deluſions held out to engage a miſerable people in rebellion, murder, and ſacrilege, and to make them prompt and zealous inſtruments in the ruin of their country! Never did a ſtate, in any caſe, enrich itſelf by the confiſcations of the citizens. This new experiment has ſucceeded like all the reſt. Every honeſt mind, every true lover of liberty and humanity, muſt rejoice to find that injuſtice is not always good policy, nor rapine the high road to riches. I ſubjoin with pleaſure, in a note, the able and ſpirited obſervations of M. de Calonne on this ſubject *.

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* "Ce n'eſt point à l'aſſemblée entière que je m'adreſſe ici; je ne parle qu'à ceux qui l'égarent, en lui cachant ſous des gazes ſéduiſantes le but où ils l'entraînent. C'eſt à eux que je dis: votre objet, vous n'en diſconviendrez pas, c'eſt d'ôter tout eſpoir au clergé, et de conſommer ſa ruine; c'eſt-là, en ne vous

In order to perſuade the world of the bottomleſs reſource of eccleſiaſtical confiſcation, the aſſembly have proceeded to other confiſcations of eſtates in offices, which could not be done with any common colour without being compenſated out of this grand confiſcation of landed property. They have thrown upon this fund, which was to ſhew a ſurplus, diſengaged of all charges, a new charge; namely, the compenſation to the whole body of the diſbanded judicature; and of all ſuppreſſed offices and eſtates; a charge which I cannot aſcer-

ſoupçonnant d'aucune combinaiſon de cupidité, d'aucun regard ſur le jeu des effets publics, c'eſt-là ce qu'on doit croire que vous avez en vue dans la terrible opération que vous propoſez; c'eſt ce qui doit en être le fruit. Mais le peuple qui vous y intéreſſez, quel avantage peut-il y trouver? En vous ſervant ſans ceſſe de lui, que faites-vous pour lui? Rien, abſolument rien; et, au contraire, vous faites ce qui ne conduit qu'à l'accabler de nouvelles charges. Vous avez rejeté, à ſon préjudice, une offre de 400 millions, dont l'acceptation pouvoit devenir un moyen de ſoulagement en ſa faveur; et à cette reſſource, auſſi profitable que légitime, vous avez ſubſtitué une injuſtice ruineuſe, qui, de votre propre aveu, charge le tréſor public, et par conſéquent le peuple, d'un ſurcroit de dépenſe annuelle de 50 millions au moins, et d'un rembourſement de 150 millions.

"Malheureux peuple! voilà ce que vous vaut en dernier réſultat l'expropriation de l'Egliſe, et la dureté des décrets taxateurs du traitement des miniſtres d'une religion bienfaiſante; et déſormais ils feront à votre charge: leurs charité ſoulageoient les pauvres; et vous allez être impoſés pour ſubvenir à leur entretien!"——*De l'Etat de la France*, p. 81. See alſo p. 92, and the following pages.

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tain, but which unqueſtionably amounts to many French millions. Another of the new charges, is an annuity of four hundred and eighty thouſand pounds ſterling, to be paid (if they chooſe to keep faith) by daily payments, for the intereſt of the firſt aſſignats. Have they ever given themſelves the trouble to ſtate fairly the expence of the management of the church lands in the hands of the municipalities, to whoſe care, ſkill, and diligence, and that of their legion of unknown under agents, they have choſen to commit the charge of the forfeited eſtates, and the conſequence of which had been ſo ably pointed out by the biſhop of Nancy?

But it is unneceſſary to dwell on theſe obvious heads of incumbrance. Have they made out any clear ſtate of the grand incumbrance of all, I mean the whole of the general and municipal eſtabliſhments of all ſorts, and compared it with the regular income by revenue? Every deficiency in theſe becomes a charge on the confiſcated eſtate, before the creditor can plant his cabbages on an acre of church property. There is no other prop than this confiſcation to keep the whole ſtate from tumbling to the ground. In this ſituation they have purpoſely covered all that they ought induſtriouſly to have cleared, with a thick fog; and then, blindfold themſelves, like bulls that ſhut their eyes when they puſh, they drive, by the point of the bayonets, their ſlaves, blindfolded indeed no worſe

than their lords, to take their fictions for currencies, and to ſwallow down paper pills by thirty-four millions ſterling at a doſe. Then they proudly lay in their claim to a future credit, on failure of all their paſt engagements, and at a time when (if in ſuch a matter any thing can be clear) it is clear that the ſurplus eſtates will never anſwer even the firſt of their mortgages, I mean that of the four-hundred million (or ſixteen millions ſterling) of *aſſignats*. In all this procedure I can diſcern neither the ſolid ſenſe of plain dealing, nor the ſubtle dexterity of ingenious fraud. The objection within the aſſembly to pulling up the flood-gates for this inundation of fraud, are unanſwered; but they are thoroughly refuted by an hundred thouſand financiers in the ſtreet. Theſe are the numbers by which the metaphyſick arithmeticians compute. Theſe are the grand calculations on which a philoſophical publick credit is founded in France. They cannot raiſe ſupplies; but they can raiſe mobs. Let them rejoice in the applauſes of the club at Dundee, for their wiſdom and patriotiſm in having thus applied the plunder of the citizens to the ſervice of the ſtate. I hear of no addreſs upon this ſubject from the directors of the bank of England; though their approbation would be of a *little* more weight in the ſcale of credit than that of the club at Dundee. But, to do juſtice to the club, I believe the gentlemen who compoſe it to be wiſer

than they appear; that they will be leſs liberal of their money than of their addreſſes; and that they would not give a dog's ear of their moſt rumpled and ragged Scotch paper for twenty of your faireſt aſſignats.

Early in this year the aſſembly iſſued paper to the amount of ſixteen millions ſterling: What muſt have been the ſtate into which the aſſembly has brought your affairs, that the relief afforded by ſo vaſt a ſupply has been hardly perceptible? This paper alſo felt an almoſt immediate depreciation of five per cent. which in a little time came to about ſeven. The effect of theſe aſſignats on the receipt of the revenue is remarkable. Mr. Necker found that the collectors of the revenue, who received in coin, paid the treaſury in *aſſignats*. The collectors made ſeven per cent. by thus receiving in money, and accounting in depreciated paper. It was not very difficult to foreſee, that this muſt be inevitable. It was, however, not the leſs embarraſſing. Mr. Necker was obliged (I believe, for a conſiderable part, in the market of London) to buy gold and ſilver for the mint, which amounted to about twelve thouſand pounds above the value of the commodity gained. That miniſter was of opinion, that whatever their ſecret nutritive virtue might be, the ſtate could not live upon *aſſignats* alone; that ſome real ſilver was neceſſary, particularly for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who, having

ing iron in their hands, were not likely to diſtinguiſh themſelves for patience, when they ſhould perceive that whilſt an increaſe of pay was held out to them in real money, it was again to be fraudulently drawn back by depreciated paper. The miniſter, in this very natural diſtreſs, applied to the aſſembly, that they ſhould order the collectors to pay in ſpecie what in ſpecie they had received. It could not eſcape him, that if the treaſury paid three per cent. for the uſe of a currency, which ſhould be returned ſeven per cent. worſe than the miniſter iſſued it, ſuch a dealing could not very greatly tend to enrich the publick. The aſſembly took no notice of his recommendation. They were in this dilemma—If they continued to receive the aſſignats, caſh muſt become an alien to their treaſury: if the treaſury ſhould refuſe thoſe paper *amulets*, or ſhould diſcountenance them in any degree, they muſt deſtroy the credit of their ſole reſource. They ſeem then to have made their option; and to have given ſome ſort of credit to their paper by taking it themſelves; at the ſame time in their ſpeeches they made a ſort of ſwaggering declaration, ſomething, I rather think, above legiſlative competence; that is, that there is no difference in value between metallick money and their aſſignats. This was a good ſtout proof article of faith, pronounced under an anathema, by the venerable fathers of this philoſophick

ſynod.

ſynod. *Credat* who will—certainly not *Judæus Apella.*

A noble indignation riſes in the minds of your popular leaders, on hearing the magick lanthorn in their ſhew of finance compared to the fraudulent exhibitions of Mr. Law. They cannot bear to hear the ſands of his Miſſiſſippi compared with the rock of the church, on which they build their ſyſtem. Pray let them ſuppreſs this glorious ſpirit, until they ſhew to the world what piece of ſolid ground there is for their aſſignats, which they have not pre-occupied by other charges. They do injuſtice to that great, mother fraud, to compare it with their degenerate imitation. It is not true that Law built ſolely on a ſpeculation concerning the Miſſiſſippi. He added the Eaſt India trade; he added the African trade; he added the farms of all the farmed revenue of France. All theſe together unqueſtionably could not ſupport the ſtructure which the publick enthuſiaſm, not he, choſe to build upon theſe baſes. But theſe were, however, in compariſon, generous deluſions. They ſuppoſed, and they aimed at an increaſe of the commerce of France. They opened to it the whole range of the two hemiſpheres. They did not think of feeding France from its own ſubſtance. A grand imagination found in this flight of commerce ſomething to captivate. It was wherewithal to dazzle the eye of an eagle. It was not made to entice

entice the ſmell of a mole, nuzzling and burying himſelf in his mother earth, as yours is. Men were not then quite ſhrunk from their natural dimenſions by a degrading and ſordid philoſophy, and fitted for low and vulgar deceptions. Above all remember, that in impoſing on the imagination, the then managers of the ſyſtem made a compliment to the freedom of men. In their fraud there was no mixture of force. This was reſerved to our time, to quench the little glimmerings of reaſon which might break in upon the ſolid darkneſs of this enlightened age.

On recollection, I have ſaid nothing of a ſcheme of finance which may be urged in favour of the abilities of theſe gentlemen, and which has been introduced with great pomp, though not yet finally adopted in the national aſſembly. It comes with ſomething ſolid in aid of the credit of the paper circulation; and much has been ſaid of its utility and its elegance. I mean the project for coining into money the bells of the ſuppreſſed churches. This is their alchymy. There are ſome follies which baffle argument; which go beyond ridicule; and which excite no feeling in us but diſguſt; and therefore I ſay no more upon it.

It is as little worth remarking any farther upon all their drawing and re-drawing, on their circulation for putting off the evil day, on the play between

tween the treaſury and the *Caiſſe d'Eſcompte*, and on all theſe old exploded contrivances of mercantile fraud, now exalted into policy of ſtate. The revenue will not be trifled with. The prattling about the rights of men will not be accepted in payment for a biſcuit or a pound of gun-powder. Here then the metaphyſicians deſcend from their airy ſpeculations, and faithfully follow examples. What examples? The examples of bankrupts. But defeated, baffled, diſgraced, when their breath, their ſtrength, their inventions, their fancies deſert them, their confidence ſtill maintains its ground. In the manifeſt failure of their abilities, they take credit for their benevolence. When the revenue diſappears in their hands, they have the preſumption, in ſome of their late proceedings, to value *themſelves* on the relief given to the people. They did not relieve the people. If they entertained ſuch intentions, why did they order the obnoxious taxes to be paid? The people relieved themſelves in ſpite of the aſſembly.

But waving all diſcuſſion on the parties who may claim the merit of this fallacious relief, has there been, in effect, any relief to the people in any form? Mr. Bailly, one of the grand agents of paper circulation, lets you into the nature of this relief. His ſpeech to the national aſſembly contained a high and laboured panegyrick on the inhabitants of Paris for the conſtancy and unbroken reſolution

reſolution with which they have borne their diſtreſs and miſery. A fine picture of publick felicity! What! great courage and unconquerable firmneſs of mind to endure benefits, and ſuſtain redreſs! One would think from the ſpeech of this learned lord mayor, that the Pariſians, for this twelvemonth paſt, had been ſuffering the ſtraits of ſome dreadful blockade; that Henry the Fourth had been ſtopping up the avenues to their ſupply, and Sully thundering with his ordnance at the gates of Paris; when in reality they are beſieged by no other enemies than their own madneſs and folly, their own credulity and perverſeneſs. But Mr. Bailly will ſooner thaw the eternal ice of his atlantick regions, than reſtore the central heat to Paris, whilſt it remains "ſmitten with the cold, "dry, petrifick mace" of a falſe and unfeeling philoſophy. Some time after this ſpeech, that is, on the thirteenth of laſt Auguſt, the ſame magiſtrate, giving an account of his government at the bar of the ſame aſſembly, expreſſes himſelf as follows: "In the month of July 1789," [the period of everlaſting commemoration] "the finances of "the city of Paris were *yet* in good order; the "expenditure was counterbalanced by the receipt, "and ſhe had at that time a million" [forty thouſand pounds ſterling] "in bank. The expences "which ſhe has been conſtrained to incur, *ſubſe-* "*quent to the revolution,* amount to 2,500,000 "livres.

"livres. From theſe expences, and the great fall-
"ing off in the product of the *free gifts*, not only
"a momentary, but a *total* want of money has
"taken place." This is the Paris, upon whoſe nouriſhment, in the courſe of the laſt year, ſuch immenſe ſums, drawn from the vitals of all France, have been expended. As long as Paris ſtands in the place of ancient Rome, ſo long ſhe will be maintained by the ſubject provinces. It is an evil inevitably attendant on the dominion of ſovereign democratick republicks. As it happened in Rome, it may ſurvive that republican domination which gave riſe to it. In that caſe deſpotiſm itſelf muſt ſubmit to the vices of popularity. Rome, under her emperours, united the evils of both ſyſtems; and this unnatural combination was one great cauſe of her ruin.

To tell the people that they are relieved by the dilapidation of their publick eſtate, is a cruel and inſolent impoſition. Stateſmen, before they valued themſelves on the relief given to the people by the deſtruction of their revenue, ought firſt to have carefully attended to the ſolution of this problem:—Whether it be more advantageous to the people to pay conſiderably, and to gain in proportion; or to gain little or nothing, and to be diſburthened of all contribution? My mind is made up to decide in favour of the firſt propoſition. Experience is with me, and, I believe, the beſt opinions alſo. To keep a balance between the

power

power of acquiſition on the part of the ſubject, and the demands he is to anſwer on the part of the ſtate, is a fundamental part of the ſkill of a true politician. The means of acquiſition are prior in time and in arrangement. Good order is the foundation of all good things. To be enabled to acquire, the people, without being ſervile, muſt be tractable and obedient. The magiſtrate muſt have his reverence, the laws their authority. The body of the people muſt not find the principles of natural ſubordination by art rooted out of their minds. They muſt reſpect that property of which they cannot partake. They muſt labour to obtain what by labour can be obtained: and when they find, as they commonly do, the ſucceſs diſproportioned to the endeavour, they muſt be taught their conſolation in the final proportions of eternal juſtice. Of this conſolation whoever deprives them, deadens their induſtry, and ſtrikes at the root of all acquiſition as of all conſervation. He that does this is the cruel oppreſſor, the mercileſs enemy of the poor and wretched; at the ſame time that by his wicked ſpeculations he expoſes the fruits of ſucceſsful induſtry, and the accumulations of fortune, to the plunder of the negligent, the diſappointed, and the unproſperous.

Too many of the financiers by profeſſion are apt to ſee nothing in revenue but banks, and circulations, and annuities on lives, and tontines, and perpetual rents, and all the ſmall wares of the ſhop.

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